

STIRRING TALES OF OLD BUCCANEER DAYS

THE SPECTRE BRIG

OR OUR BOYS AFLOAT ON A RAFT



Novels Bought and Sold

ROBERT H. SMELTZER

3432 N. BODINE ST.,

PHILADELPHIA, - PA.

RECEIVED
JAN 10 1892
LIBRARY
THOMAS
MTCO

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: At some time or other the fascination of life at sea takes hold upon the imagination of the average lad who has healthy red blood in his veins. From the day he is able to read the stirring adventures of Robinson Crusoe, a yearning to travel and look upon strange sights the world over takes possession of him. Usually this gradually gives way to the less strenuous pleasures that surround him at home, but in innumerable instances it has led young fellows to go forth to seek their fortune. And next to Robinson Crusoe, boys have somehow loved to read of the bold buccaneers who harried the sea at the time Spain was sending the treasures stolen from Mexico and Peru across to the mother country. In this series we purpose giving thrilling stories of those notorious old sea tigers and what wonderful adventures three brave boys met among them. These stories will be found exciting enough to please everyone, but above reproach, since there is not the slightest design shown to glorify the life of a buccaneer or pirate, but rather the reverse. They are the very best tales that money can buy, and we believe will receive a rousing welcome from boys.



Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1905, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C., by THE WINNER LIBRARY CO., 165 West Fifteenth St., New York, N. Y.

No. 37.

NEW YORK, September 23, 1905.

Price Five Cents.

THE SPECTRE BRIG

OR,

Our Boys Afloat on a Raft.

By AN OLD SALT.

CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

Thad, Oliver and "Simple Simon," the three boy chums who set out to win renown and benefit humanity by capturing the notorious Captain Kidd at the time New York was but a small town. Thad was the recognized leader of the valiant trio, and Simon very often proved to be not so very "simple" after all, since he possessed a bold heart, and was ready to risk much for the right.

Sir Harry Morgan, "The Red Scourge," the most famous pirate and buccaneer of history, who by his bloody excesses and the ingenuity, cruelty and daring of his practical undertakings made his name one of dread and horror throughout the Atlantic.

Bat Grimshaw, Morgan's first officer, the degenerate son of an English nobleman.

Jack Harkness, once an English boatswain, but now second mate under Morgan.

Captain Sprigg, one of the buccaneer's understudies, a Yankee who thought to get rich by overhauling the Spanish treasure ships.

Bunline, a gunner.

Rocco de Garma, a treacherous Italian in the pay of "The Spider."

Don Jose, the infamous "Spider" of Santo Domingo.

Black Barto, superintendent of the mines where the white slaves worked, and who dared aspire to win the hand of Helen.

Captain Heathdale, whose English vessel had the misfortune to fall into evil hands.

Helen, daughter of the staunch hearted Heathdale.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHASE OF THE BRIG.

"Sail ho!"

The lookout on the foretop of the *Tigress*, Sir Henry Morgan's buccaneering craft, sung out these words with a will.

On board the pirate vessel every sail spied meant a possible chance for rich booty. Every man, therefore, was on the alert for any sign of a strange ship.

For a week past, ever since she had left Santo Domingo, in fact, the *Tigress* had cruised in the path of the homeward-bound plate ships; but without the vigilance of the buccaneer lookouts being rewarded by even the sight of a small trader.

At the sharp cry uttered by the lookout, the men of Sir Henry Morgan's command, who had been lounging about the deck in every attitude of inertness, sprang into life.

The bulwarks were soon lined with eager-faced sea

robbers who gazed earnestly at the vessel the lookout had called attention to.

"Bat" Grimshaw, one of Morgan's smartest officers, although a coarse and brutal man, soon gave them something else to do than stare, however.

The *Tigress* had been bowling along under easy canvas, but the mate, with a quick glance from the chase to the sails of the buccaneer ship, evidently decided that she was not doing her best.

A few terse commands from him set the rigging fairly alive with men.

The *Tigress*, in common with the rest of the buccaneer craft of that day, carried an immense crew. Consequently, in half the time that it would have taken a merchant vessel, her spars were crowded with every rag of sail they could carry, and the ship, whose name had become the terror of the Caribbean, was tearing through the water with the speed of a race horse.

Nor was the craft ahead idle in the manner in which she increased her sail area. She was, however, far smaller than the *Tigress* and not apparently less speedy.

Morgan's ship outfooted her at every reach. As the buccaneer craft went on the windward tack, those aboard her got a good look at the vessel they were chasing.

She was a likely little craft. Her spars were of tremendous height for her water line, and her snowy canvas seemed almost out of proportion to her slender build.

Her lines, in fact, were those of a private pleasure boat. This appearance was carried out in her fittings. As she heeled over to go about the men watching her caught the glint of brass work and fine polished wood fittings.

Her stern was elaborately carved and finished in gilt scroll work. She showed, too, several ports, which indicated that she was as ready to fight as to run, if driven to it.

Just now, however, it evidently did not suit her purpose to show her teeth, for, as the *Tigress* went to windward once more, the strange brig put up her helm and stood away on the opposite tack.

"She shows a clean pair of heels, but not quite fast enough to run away from the old *Tigress*, eh, Thad?"

The speaker, a richly dressed man, whose whole appearance bespoke him a corsair, and who was, in fact, none other than Sir Henry Morgan, the buccaneer, whose depredations on the Caribbean had earned him the name of the "Sea Scourge," turned to our old friend, Thad Fergus, who, with his comrades, Oliver and Simple Simon, the Dutch lad, were standing at his elbow.

"And yet, captain, she looks as if she could fight at a pinch," replied Thad, who had been scrutinizing the stranger through a heavy, brass telescope.

"True, lad. That is just what puzzles me about her. She is evidently not a merchant craft."

"I swear that she begins to gain on us!" cried Grimshaw at this moment.

"How say you?" cried Morgan, knitting his brows.

"She outfooted us on the last tack," replied the mate.

Morgan walked over to the helm. He went straight up to the man at the tiller.

"Keep her up in the wind more, fellow," he growled, tapping the pistols which adorned his crimson sash significantly. "If yon vessel gives us the slip your life shall pay the penalty."

The man addressed, a small Italian, Rocco de Garmo by name, cringed before the frown of his chief, but, as the latter turned away the Italian's eyes flashed with hatred and his hand mechanically fingered the keen knife at his waist.

He had been shipped at Santo Domingo, to take the place of a boatswain Morgan had killed when he detected him in an act of treachery.

He seemed a willing enough hand, but there was something about him that, as his shipmates said, was "fishy." Grimshaw had noticed this, and had made up his mind that Rocco would bear watching.

"Lay out those fellows aloft, Mister Grimshaw," was Sir Henry's next order. "Clap on more sail. My blood is up now, and I wouldn't lose the chance of overhauling yon mysterious craft and learning what she does in these waters for the finest chance at a plate ship that e'er befell to our lot."

This order given, the buccaneer climbed onto the weather rail of the poop, and, holding on by a backstay, fixed his steady gaze on the brig.

Unwilling as he was to admit it, there seemed no room to doubt the truth of Grimshaw's assertion that the chase was steadily slipping away from them.

Morgan glanced aloft. There was no chance of crowding any more sail on the *Tigress*.

As it was, the rigging of the buccaneer craft hummed like the wires of a harp under the strain. This was dangerous sailing in the Caribbean, one of the most treacherous seas in the world. A sudden squall would have meant that the masts would have been whipped out of the *Tigress* as if they were knitting needles. But Sir Henry Morgan was not calculating on any such possibility. One of the secrets of his eminence as a buccaneer,

was his absolute indifference to imperiling his own life and those who served under him.

In the meantime Thad and his two comrades stood in the bow and watched the chase with equal interest if with different emotions.

"I cannot understand," said Thad, "how it is that the brig, which at first seemed but an indifferent sailer, should be slipping away from us like this."

"Perhaps she was only playing possum," suggested Simple Simon.

"What object could she have in that?" asked Oliver.

"I know not," replied Thad; "but certain it is that yon craft is no peaceful trader. She looks to me more as if she was engaged in our own trade."

As the distance between the two vessels increased Morgan's face grew dark as a storm cloud.

"Harkness," he cried to the boatswain of the *Tigress*, "tell Buntline to try a shot with the bow chaser. A puncheon of rum and a pint measure of doubloons if he can wing her."

Buntline was a deserter from the British Navy, in which he had been famed for his gunnery. He had proved his skill a hundred times in Morgan's service.

He knew that this was a critical moment. He bent over the brass "Long Tom" for some time before it was adjusted to his satisfaction.

Morgan himself stood by him as he lit the tow and applied it to the touchhole.

A loud report followed, and the ball screeched through the air.

The brig kept to her course without a stagger.

The shot had not harmed her.

Buntline looked at Morgan appealingly.

"It was no fault of mine, sir," he said, "the ship fell away as I fired."

"He speaks the truth, sir," said Grimshaw, who was in the group round the gun. "The helm was put down at the critical moment."

Thad saw Morgan's eyes grow cold and hard as steel and his mouth snapped in a thin, cruel line.

"There is some treachery aboard," he growled, "and one of the traitors dies on the instant."

He turned without another word and walked to the stern. Straight up to the Italian at the helm he strode.

Rocco saw the look on his face and turned a sickly hue, while beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead.

He knew that he had signed his death warrant, and,

the knowledge that he was to die, nerved his arm to a desperate act.

He released the tiller, and, drawing his murderous knife, rushed at Morgan with the fury of a wild cat. His dark features were convulsed with the terribly desperate look of a coward at bay.

The buccaneer chief stepped aside as the other lunged at him. The Italian, carried by the impetus of his furious attack, went staggering across the deck, as he missed his mark.

Before he could recover himself a bullet from Morgan's pistol shattered his backbone, and he fell, writhing, to the deck.

"So perish all traitors," was Morgan's remark, as he blew the smoke from the barrel of his weapon.

At the same moment there was a noise like thunder from aloft. The air was filled with snapping ropes and falling spars.

When the Italian had released the tiller the ship had swung about. Everyone had been too engrossed in watching the outcome of Morgan's encounter to notice this.

As a result, the *Tigress* lay helpless on the waves, with her mizenmast snapped in half, as if it had been a match.

Those on the brig must have noticed this mishap, for she at once put about and laid on a course that would bring her right down on the *Tigress*.

As she raced past the helpless ship, with every thread of canvas drawing like a plaster, as sailors say, a voice hailed them.

"Fools!" it cried. "Learn from this not to pursue the Death Ship of the Caribbean."

The hailer of the *Tigress* was the only man visible on the decks of the strange vessel.

At first glance he seemed to be merely an ordinary mariner. A second look, however, caused the more superstitious of the crew of the *Tigress* to cross themselves in terror.

In place of a head, the man on the mysterious brig bore a grinning skull!

At the same moment a flag was run, by some invisible agency, to her peak.

It was red as blood. In the center was a black spot, which, on closer inspection, proved to be a tarantula.

As the brig bore away, Morgan gazed after it. He shook his great fist in the air at the rapidly disappearing craft.

"Though she be manned by all the powers of hell, this sea will know no rest till I've smoked yon vessel out," he roared.

CHAPTER II.

ABOUT A MAP AND A SPIDER.

All that night the crew of the *Tigress* worked at putting extra spars in place. By dawn they had rigged up a very tolerable substitute for the destroyed mizzen topmast.

As the rising sun dissipated the shadows of the night, Morgan came on deck. His eyes were heavy, and he had evidently passed a sleepless night.

He unslung the great, brass telescope from the hooks to which it was attached, when not in use, and eagerly scanned the horizon for some trace of the mysterious brig.

His search was in vain, however. From horizon to horizon the sea was empty. Not a sail loomed up in sight.

"Is the devil himself in league with them?" he muttered, angrily, as he replaced the glass.

"It would seem so," replied Grimshaw, who had approached the buccaneer, to report what had befallen during the night. "And, by the way, captain," he went on, "should we fall in with that brig again and you determine to chase her, we are going to have trouble."

"What mean you, sirrah?"

"Simply this. That the men declare she is a specter brig, and will refuse to work the ship."

"A murrain on them!" was Sir Henry's angry reply. "Then some of them will go to Davy Jones' locker for their foolhardiness."

"You will have scarcely any crew left, then. The sight of that fellow with the skull has set them in a panic."

"Pshaw! Are they children, that a death's head can frighten them like that? An extra round or two of rum will put all their fears to flight."

"You think to exorcise one set of spirits with another, eh?"

"I tell you, Grimshaw, I mean to lay aboard that brig if I have to beat up hell itself to do it. Anyway, I am convinced that that skull was only a mask. It was a trick to evade pursuit."

He turned on his heel and fell to pacing the poop angrily. The loss of the brig had had a bad effect on the buccaneer's temper.

"Send those boys to me," he ordered, after several moments of silent pacing; "the counsel of young Thad is worth more to me than the mouthings of all you numbskulls put together."

The boys soon appeared. It was difficult for them to conceal their disgust at the death of the Italian.

For this reason they had kept to their cabin till summoned. True, they realized that Morgan's life had been endangered. Still, Thad thought the buccaneer might have made a prisoner of him instead of shooting the fellow in the back, in cold blood.

Morgan noticed the restraint in their manner, and went right to the point.

"You blame me for killing that Italian?" he asked.

Thad replied that they thought the matter might have been settled in some other way.

"And yet," said Morgan, "the man was a traitor and a spy."

"How can you be sure of that?" asked Thad.

Morgan reached into the breast of his loose shirt and drew therefrom a piece of parchment, much soiled with what looked like blood stains. He walked into his cabin and nodded to the boys to follow him.

When the parchment was spread out on the table, Thad saw that it was a map of some kind. It was crudely drawn. In one spot it was marked with a red cross.

"This map was found on the dead Italian. Do you recognize that coast?" asked Morgan, indicating the map.

Thad shook his head.

"Give me the chart of Honduras coast line."

The buccaneer laid his finger on the chart at a spot marked "Dead Man's Cove," with the note appended: "Wood and water here; but beware of the Caribs."

The boys gave a cry of surprise.

"Why, it's the same."

"You say sooth. Now, look at this." He pointed to a crude drawing in the corner of the parchment.

"It's a tarantula!" cried Thad.

"The same insignia as that of the specter brig," said Morgan.

"She cannot have anything to do with that scoundrel, Don Jose, the Spider of Santo Domingo," said Thad.

"I do not know. That is what we must find out. He slipped through my fingers once. I do not mean that he shall do so again."

"What do you intend to do, captain?" asked Thad.

"Make for the coast of Honduras, at the spot indicated."

on the chart, and there await the Spider, if it is he. Putting that traitor aboard the *Tigress* seems like one of his tricks."

"Do you think he has disaffected the rest of the crew?" was Thad's next question.

"I know not. The Spider's gold might buy more loyal men than those that sail under the black flag."

"They fear the specter brig," said Simple Simon; "I overheard them saying that they would have no hand in chasing her."

"And if they carry out their resolve they shall find me more terrible than any specter craft that sails the sea," was the reply of the buccaneer.

The day wore away slowly. The strain under which all hands were laboring was evident. Every strange sound set the more nervous to jumping like frightened cats.

Morgan and Grimshaw alone, with the exception of the three boys, kept their nerve. The former were too brutally calloused to fear God or man.

The boys' courage came from their youth and the sense that they had done nothing to warrant any fear of the powers of darkness.

The patched-up mizzen topmast proved as good as the old one, and, with all her fair-weather canvas spread, the *Tigress* made such good sailing that, shortly before sundown the boys sighted a low-lying streak of what seemed a purple cloud bank on the western horizon.

Morgan and Grimshaw, however, announced it to be the coast of Honduras. This put the boys into a great state of excitement, for they knew that if they fell in with the specter brig they were bound to have many strange adventures.

The sun set in a blaze of purple and gold. Even in those waters where the decline of day is a nightly pageant, it was an unusually magnificent sight.

The boys stood entranced, looking at the cloud palaces that the sinking sun painted a hundred gorgeous hues.

The grandeur of the scene did not, however, affect Morgan and his mate.

"Those clouds mean wind to-morrow, Grimshaw," said the buccaneer.

The other nodded.

Suddenly the whole ship was electrified by a loud cry from Thad, who had been gazing at the western horizon.

"Sail, ho!"

"Where away?" bawled Morgan's great voice, quivering with excitement.

"Off the larboard bow!"

"What do you make of her?"

"She's a brig, and headed the same way we are!"

The sun sank, and, almost instantly, darkness fell on the waters.

"It's the specter brig!" exclaimed Morgan, with an oath.

"By our lady, even the powers of darkness befriend her!"

CHAPTER III.

THE CREW MUTINIES.

There was little sleep for anyone aboard the *Tigress* that night. A close watch was kept, and Grimshaw was not satisfied with the set of the sails for two minutes together.

The crew got but brief breathing spells, for the wind came in puffs and the ship needed careful nursing.

Grimshaw still cherished his animosity for the boys, and they spent most of the night talking with Jack Harkness, who had been promoted from boatswain to mate for his bravery in the fight with Black Diego.

Harkness knew the coast they were now approaching well. When only a boy he had been marooned there by the infamous pirate, Blackbeard. With him the corsair had cast away two other sailors. Harkness had escaped, and, after weeks of terrible suffering, reached Truxillo.

Here he had shipped on a vessel bound for Spain. She had fallen into the hands of the buccaneers. Rather than walk the plank, Harkness, who had been offered his choice, joined the free rovers.

He was a good-hearted, brave, young Englishman, and the boys always wondered that he stuck to buccaneering. His own reason was that he liked the life of adventure it offered.

The second mate of the *Tigress* had, during his wandering among the Caribs, picked up some knowledge of their language. This had several times proven useful to him.

He told the boys that their present errand was a very dangerous one.

The tribe of Caribs inhabiting that part of the coast were not like their peaceful brethren of Grenada; but fierce, man-eating savages.

It was into the hands of these people that the two men who had been marooned with Harkness had fallen.

He had long ago given up all hope of ever seeing them again. In fact, he did not doubt but that they had been killed and eaten long ago.

Daylight showed them the Honduras coast so near that they could pick out the separate clumps of royal palms that fringed the low-lying hills along the shores.

Further inland were great mountains, most of them covered from base to summit with rank tropical vegetation. In places, though, were large, bare patches of cliff, like scars on their sides.

Great flocks of strange birds followed the *Tigress* and wheeled, screaming harshly, about her masts.

All this, however, passed unnoticed by those on board the buccaneer. For she had sighted, as day broke, the specter brig!

She was scudding along close inshore, further in than Morgan dared take his ship for fear of running her aground.

The brig's nearness to the shore proved, however, to be to her disadvantage, for, as the day wore on, the wind chopped round, and the high hills inland cut off the breeze from the shore-hugging craft.

The *Tigress* began to steadily overhaul her. Morgan was jubilant. "We'll see what that fellow's made of ere the sun sets," he declared.

As yet no murmur had been heard from the crew, but the boys noticed that Morgan, and his two mates, were armed even more heavily than was their wont.

They evidently expected trouble, and were prepared to meet it halfway.

At last scarcely half a league separated the two vessels. Morgan ordered the bow gun got ready.

The priming was adjusted and a load of chain shot rammed home, when a cry from Grimshaw caused everybody to look in the direction he was pointing.

He indicated the place where they had last seen the brig.

There was nothing there!

Had the sea swallowed her, the disappearance of the mysterious craft could not have been more utter.

"She was running close inshore," cried the mate, "and I was watching her, when suddenly she vanished, right under my very eyes."

"There must be some cove or inlet into which she has slipped," suggested Thad, remembering Kidd's hiding place on Long Island.

"Right you are, lad," said Morgan, as his eye swept the

shore. "But if such is the case, the means of her escape are not visible from here."

Indeed, the coast at this point seemed particularly unlikely to afford a refuge to any ship.

Great cliffs shot sheer up from the water. They were, for the most part, bare walls of gray rock. In places, however, a curtain-like mass of green creepers hid their surface.

"We'll have a boat lowered and explore those cliffs thoroughly," said Morgan, turning to Grimshaw.

The mate shrugged his shoulders.

"You'll not be able to get a crew to man it," he said.

Morgan's face turned purple.

"We'll soon see about that," he said. "Buntline, pipe away the captain's gig."

The gunner boatswain placed the whistle to his lips and blew the required call.

The crew were grouped about the forward deck. Not a man stirred.

Morgan bit his lip. He was trying to control his temper.

"Try them again, Buntline," was all he said.

The second call met with no better response than the first.

Morgan's hand fumbled with the pistols in his belt. He half drew one, and then, thinking better of it, thrust it back.

"Forward, there!" he shouted, after a few moments of thought. "You were not wont to be so sluggish. What ails you?"

A grizzled, old salt stepped out and shuffled slowly aft, followed by his shipmates. They all bore a determined look.

"It won't do to trifle with these fellows," whispered Thad to Oliver and Simple Simon.

"Well, Tacker, what is the matter?" asked Morgan, addressing the old man.

"Just this, Sir Henry," was the reply, "that not a man aboard this here vessel will lend a hand in the chase of yon specter brig."

"Why, man," laughed Morgan, with an effort to pass the matter off lightly, "she may prove a rich prize. Are you going to be scared by a few skulls and bones?"

"We're afraid of nothing human," was the stolid reply, "but yon brig was never built by mortal hands, and no man aboard this ship will risk meddling with her."

He folded his arms and stepped back, as if the final

word had been spoken, while a growl of approval went up from the rest of the men.

"Are not we all Brethren of the Main?" spoke up one.

"Ay, we have a say in the matter. We're all equal," said another.

Morgan snapped up the last speaker like the crack of a whip.

"Not aboard this ship!" he exclaimed. "I'm captain here, and, by the Lord Harry! captain I'll remain till some better man puts me out."

The men did not move. Morgan's brows contracted. He drew out his great, silver watch.

"I'll give you five minutes to make up your minds to man that boat," he said.

"We don't want five minutes," rejoined Tacker. "We pull no oars in chase of that hell craft."

"Then take your reward!"

Morgan whipped out one of his pistols and fired point-blank at the old man.

He fell in a heap, without uttering a sound, shot through the head.

The utter coldbloodedness of the deed, combined with its total unexpectedness, made the boys' blood boil.

It would have been useless to say anything, however, and Thad remained silent.

"You see what yon knave got," said Morgan, pointing to the still twitching body at his feet; "who'll have the next turn?"

None of the men spoke. Morgan walked over to the body and kicked it contemptuously.

"Remove this dead dog," he said, with a savage look about him.

Still no one stirred. The silence grew ominous. All felt that the storm was about to break.

Suddenly, as though actuated by some private signal, the men charged the party on the poop.

The boys were in sympathy with the men, but, after Oliver had been knocked down and slightly stabbed by one of the mutineers, and Thad had got a flesh wound on the shoulder, they concluded that, to save their lives, they must fight on Morgan's side.

Luckily for the buccaneer's party, the men were only armed with their sea knives. There was a strict rule on Morgan's ships that, except in action, all arms should be kept in the cabin.

A few of the men had capstan bars, which they wielded like flails. As yet Morgan's party had managed to ward off the blows of these murderous weapons.

The crew numbered over fifty men. On Morgan's side were the three boys, Grimshaw, Harkness and the boat-swain, Buntline. A mere handful of men opposed to the force that faced them over the dead body of the old sailor.

There was no time to reload their pistols, once they were discharged, and both sides were soon engaged in a hand-to-hand fight.

A gigantic negro, wielding a heavy capstan bar, made a rush at Morgan. Thad's blade darted out, like a serpent's tongue, and the huge brute fell to the deck.

"Bravo, Thad!" cried Morgan. "That accounts for five of them."

The words had not left his lips when a terrific blow from a capstan bar, in the hands of a powerful German felled him insensible to the deck.

The men uttered a cry of triumph. Grimshaw rushed to the side of his wounded captain.

"Do you carry him to the cabin, while I and Harkness hold them back with our cutlasses," he gasped, panting from the tremendous sword play they were engaged in.

The three boys carried Morgan into the cabin and laid him on a couch.

The wounded buccaneer remained unconscious. Seeing that they could do nothing for him, in his present condition, the boys were about to return to the deck when Harkness, followed by Grimshaw and Buntline rushed into the cabin.

"What's the matter?" asked Thad.

"They are too strong for us, lad," panted Harkness, wiping his reeking blade on one of the fine hangings of the cabin.

"We must fight it out from here," added Grimshaw.

"Have we any chance of beating them off, think you?" asked Thad.

"I fear not," replied Harkness; "but we can sell our lives as dearly as possible!"

The windows of the cabin commanded the deck, and through these they fired as fast as they could load the pistols.

Suddenly Thad, who had been surveying the scene through one of the ports, uttered a cry.

Brave as he had ever been amid all perils, the New York boy's face was white as he replied to the eager questions of the others:

"They are dragging up the great gun and have trained it on the cabin!"

Grimshaw uttered an oath.

"Our lives are not worth a farthing candle."

"We had better make a dash for it and die on deck than be blown to atoms in this rat hole," said Harkness.

Thad agreed with him. They unfastened the heavy bolts of the cabin door.

"Do you surrender?" cried the leader of the mutineers at that moment.

"Never!" cried Thad, drawing his sword and breathing a prayer as he rushed on to what seemed certain death.

"Then die like the dogs you are!"

The flaming tow, held by the man at the gun, quivered over the touchhole.

In a moment more they would all be blown to eternity.

At that moment a voice hailed them.

"*Tigress*, ahoy! Show your colors or we fire!"

A large ship had crept round the bluff, behind which they were anchored, unnoticed, during the fight. She had crept up close to them before she hailed.

She now lay, with her topsails backed, but a few boats' length from the *Tigress*.

"It's the *Centipede*, Capt. Amasa Sprigg!" shouted Grimshaw.

It was, indeed, the command of Morgan's former second mate, who had been promoted for his services to the buccaneer.

The man at the gun hesitated. His moment of indecision proved fatal to the mutineers' cause.

Thad landed him a terrible blow under the ear and he fell to the deck stunned.

The New York boy trained the gun on the mutineers.

"Forward with you all or I fire!" he cried, in determined tones.

The men skulked forward in obedience to his command.

At the same moment Grimshaw broke out the "Jolly Roger" at the peak of the *Tigress*.

CHAPTER IV.

CAPT. SPRIGG LENDS A HAND.

Capt. Amasa Sprigg was not long in lowering a boat and getting aboard the *Tigress* at the best speed his oarsmen could make.

He had suspected that something was wrong when, as his ship rounded the point, the *Tigress* had made no signal.

The *Centipede* had met with but little luck in her long cruise, and Capt. Sprigg was delighted to find the ship of

his leader once more. He judged that their combined forces would give them more chance of gaining a rich booty from the Spaniards than if they cruised singly.

As he clambered over the rail the Yankee was stricken with amazement at the state of the deck of the *Tigress*. The usually white planks were stained with blood, and the confusion left by the recent contest was everywhere in evidence.

Harkness, musket in hand, was seated on the hatch of the forepeak. They had succeeded, by the aid of Thad's clever ruse with the gun, in confining the mutineers below.

This done, they turned their attention to Morgan, leaving Harkness to guard the prisoners.

When Sprigg entered the cabin, after learning the state of affairs from Harkness, he found Morgan, with a bandaged head, sitting up and looking wildly about him.

His wound was a severe one. The pain of it had rendered him delirious. The buccaneer raved wildly of the specter brig.

It was evident to them all that Morgan would not be able to go in search of the craft that day. But Capt. Amasa Sprigg, whose Yankee ingenuity never failed to provide him with a plan, suggested that he should head the expedition.

"We cannot leave it till to-morrow," he said. "If she's as slippery as you say, she'll be leagues away by then."

Accordingly, shortly before sundown, the long boat of the *Tigress* was lowered. And Thad and his two companions, accompanied by Sprigg and Harkness, were rowed ashore by three men from the *Centipede*.

Grimshaw, with half a dozen men from Sprigg's ship, remained on board the *Tigress* to guard the imprisoned mutineers and look after Morgan.

The boat was pulled along the base of the steep cliffs they had seen from the ship. For some hours they pulled up and down, but without finding any clew to the whereabouts of the missing brig.

At last, however, Sprigg ordered the men to cease pulling. He leaned over the side and picked up an object floating on the waves.

"We're on her heels," he said, as he drew the object on board.

It was an empty barrel.

"This was surely thrown overboard from the brig," was his comment.

"What do you argue from that?" asked Thad.

"That we'll find the fly-by-night up some creek hereabouts."

"But we have searched the spot where the brig was last seen and found no trace of her."

"There are tricks in all trades, boy," was the answer.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, did you notice the way this bar'l was driftin'?"

"Yes, it did seem to be impelled by some current."

"That shows that there is a river that empties itself into the sea just about here. We'll find the brig up the river. That's logic."

"You think that the entrance to the stream is masked by one of those masses of tropical creepers?"

"That is my idea."

The boat was pulled closer inshore, and a diligent scrutiny commenced.

At last Amasa Sprigg stood upright, stern lines in hand.

"Thar's the place!" he exclaimed, pointing.

The boys looked, and saw in front of them nothing but an unusually heavy curtain of creepers hanging, like a mass of hair, down the cliff face.

"Pull like blazes, boys!" cried Amasa, his sharp features ablaze with excitement.

The men gave way with a will. The bow of the long boat cut the water like a knife.

Straight at the curtain of creepers she drove.

Her bow struck them. The men in the boat ducked their heads as the creepers parted and the boat, carried by her impetus, shot through them and into a large sheet of smooth water.

The men uttered a cry of astonishment as the natural curtains fell back behind them.

They found themselves in a large sheet of smooth water, a small lake, in fact.

At the further end of the lake they could discern the high banks of the river which fed it.

"How on earth did you pick out the place?" asked Thad of Sprigg, in amazement.

"Yankee cuteness, lad," replied Sprigg, vastly pleased at Thad's astonishment. "Yer see, I saw a muddy streak on the blue water outside, and I simply steered the boat along the trail till we struck the mouth of the river."

"Darned Nature has played the deuce here at some time," said Harkness, looking about him.

The boatwain's remark was apt. The walls of this natural harbor, shooting sheer up from its placid waters,

were still stained with traces of the eruption that had caused its formation.

The rocks were reddish in hue, and of the most fantastic forms. Everywhere was evident the force of the volcanic disturbance that had blackened and melted the walls of the place.

"A snugger harbor for a free rover could not well be imagined," said Sprigg. "This will make a fine hiding place for Morgan when we have driven out the brig."

"Don't count your chickens before they are hatched," admonished Harkness.

The second mate drew from his pocket the map that Morgan had taken from the dead Italian.

"This map shows the river, all right," he said, "but of this harbor there is not a sign."

"Nothing strange about that," said Sprigg. "It is not likely that the man who had discovered such a place as this would intrust the secret to any but himself."

"Do you think it possible that the mysterious brig is Don Jose's vessel?" asked Oliver.

"We shall soon find out, my lad," said Amasa Sprigg, as he ordered the boat's crew to give way.

They pulled for some distance up the stream, a sluggish and muddy current, without incident.

The banks were covered with such a dense growth of tropical trees and shrubs that they were only able to descry the country through which they were passing for a short distance.

The river was full of turns and twists. Here and there they took soundings with the lead and line they carried.

Their soundings showed that there was plenty of water for the brig they were in search of to have passed far up the stream.

As they paused to heave the lead, the absolute silence of the forest at noon was borne in upon them. Except for an occasional scream of a parrot, or the heavy plunge of a sluggish alligator, everything was as silent as the desert.

They must have rowed for some five or six miles when they paused for the twentieth time to take a sounding.

The sullen splash of the lead as it struck the slowly flowing stream was followed, as usual, only by the whirring sound of the line as it rushed through the leadsman's fingers.

Suddenly, however, the silence of the jungle was broken by a sound that froze the blood of the boldest in the party.

A human scream had rung out, through the silence, from somewhere further up the river!

Again and again was the terrible cry repeated.

Then it ceased, and the silence shut down again.

But not before those in the boat had realized that the voice that had rung out in such accents of wild terror was that of a woman and of a woman in the direst peril.

Thad had sprung up from his seat in the stern at the first utterance of the cries.

"There is a woman in need of help yonder!" he cried.

"Ay!" replied Harkness; "and she won't have to wait long for it."

"Give way, men!" shouted Sprigg, who, despite his trade of piracy, had a warm heart in his breast.

The men—they were mostly Americans or Englishmen—needed no second summons, but pulled at the oars till their backs cracked.

The boat fairly skimmed the water under their powerful strokes.

Sprigg stood upright in the stern and urged them on.

Thad, Harkness and the boys busied themselves with attending to their weapons.

They knew not what bend of the river would bring them upon what they had all come to regard as the specter brig.

All on board the craft realized that when they found her they would be face to face with the most desperate fight of their lives.

CHAPTER V.

THE BRIG, AND WHAT THE BOYS FOUND THERE.

The river's course was so serpentine that it was difficult for them to estimate how far off the brig they were in search of lay.

None doubted that the scream they had heard had proceeded from the mysterious craft. Still, while the distance overland might not have been more than a quarter of a mile, the tortuous windings of the river might lead them a considerable distance before they located the vessel they were in search of.

The heat was terrific. The tropical growth on either bank fairly steamed with noisome exhalations. There was, too, a heavy scent in the air, proceeding from the gorgeous flowers of the jungle, that was almost stifling.

All at once the boat shot round a projection of the bank, and there, not a stone's throw from them, was the vessel of which they were in search.

She was tied to the bank of the river, and, so far as they could see, not a soul was moving on her decks.

Sprigg ordered all hands to remain absolutely silent.

They all held their breaths for several seconds. Nothing broke the stillness, however, but the occasional twitter of some jungle bird or the sullen sound of the river swaying the growth of brush that depended from the bank.

"They are all either asleep or on shore," said Sprigg at length.

"What shall we do?" asked Harkness. "I am in favor of boarding her and seeing what the fellow is made of."

"Not of moonbeams, as the crew thought, that's one thing sure," said Sprigg.

"No, she looks solid enough," said Thad.

Indeed, the brig was a trim enough looking craft, seen at close range. She was, however, as they had remarked, apparently deserted.

The galley chimney was smokeless and her decks deserted. Altogether there was something very uncanny in her appearance.

The thoughts of the adventurers in the boat, however, were busy with quite another question.

That question was how to board her.

It was speedily solved by Harkness. The brave Englishman, with his cutlass in his teeth and grasping a pistol, swarmed up her main chains without the least trace of trepidation.

He was speedily followed by the others. At last they all stood on the brig's forecastle and surveyed her solitary deck in amazement.

As they had surmised when they first had sighted her, she was no merchant vessel. Rather did she bear the appearance of a trim frigate.

"She looked to me as if she had once carried his majesty's flag," said Harkness, as his eye swept her trim fittings and smartly dressed rigging.

"I guess the man who sails her owes something to the admiralty," rejoined Sprigg, nodding his head acquiescingly.

Thad and the boys started on a tour of exploration. They had searched the cuddy and all the deck houses without finding a trace of life, when their attention was arrested by a low groan, proceeding from a cabin opening off the cuddy.

"There is some one in distress in there," said Thad, "and I am going to their rescue."

"We are with you, Thad," exclaimed Oliver and Simple Simon, addressing their recognized leader.

The door of the cabin whence the groans had issued was locked.

Simon put his shoulder against the panel, however, and the lock flew off with a crash under the pressure of the Dutch boy's strength.

What at first sight seemed an empty cabin met their eyes.

Further investigation showed them, however, that there was some one crouched in one corner of the place.

At least there was a rustling there that seemed to indicate the presence of a human being.

"Come out, whoever you are," cried Thad; "we are not here to harm you."

There was no answer, and the New York boy pulled aside the curtain from whence the sound had proceeded.

As he did so he fell back with a cry that was echoed by Oliver and Simon.

Behind the curtains there crouched, grinning menacingly, not man, woman or child, but a huge, red-haired gorilla, or Borneo ape.

The animal did not threaten them, however, but seemed rather, with its piteous cry, to beg them for mercy.

The reason for the great brute's terror was not far to seek. Its back was literally cut into strips, apparently from some terrible beating it had recently received. It was its cries they had heard.

"There is some human fiend aboard this ship," exclaimed Thad, voicing the indignation they all felt at this terrible evidence of brutality.

There were the remains of a meal on the cabin table. Some of the fragments of food Thad picked up and offered them to the tortured animal.

It accepted them greedily and fell upon them with a childish wail of satisfaction that was pitiful to see.

When it had finished it looked up at the boys with a world of gratitude in its human-like eyes.

"That poor brute will not forget us," said Thad to his companions.

"Nor will he lose sight of the fellow who gave him that beating, I imagine," said Simple Simon.

"Hush!" broke in Oliver, suddenly. "Did you not hear something?"

They all listened, intently, straining every nerve.

The sound of soft footfalls on the deck met their ears.

"We must get out of this and join the others while

there is time," cried Thad, suddenly awaking to a full realization of their dangerous position.

They all made for the door.

Thad's hand was on the handle when it was violently wrenched from him by some one on the outside.

The boys heard a heavy bolt fall into place as this happened.

They realized, with a thrill of horror, that they were prisoners.

"Boys," said Thad, turning to the other two, who looked at him with white faces, "this is the most serious position we have yet been in. We are in the hands of one who must be the most cruel wretch that walks the earth. The man who is responsible for the mistreatment of that poor gorilla. We must not lose heart, however, but hope for the best. Something may happen to put us beyond the reach of our captors."

"Well," said Simple Simon, something suspiciously like a sob in his voice, "I don't see how we are ever to get out of this."

"No," was Oliver's comment, "we are trapped like flies in a spider's web!"

As his comrade uttered these words, Thad remembered the tarantula in the corner of the dead sailor's map, and what Morgan had said about the cruel Spider of Santo Domingo, Don Jose.

Brave as he was, the New York boy uttered a prayer as he thought of what their fate would be if, indeed, their captor turned out to be the crafty Spaniard they had outwitted only a short time before.

Suddenly a ray of hope penetrated the blackness of his thoughts.

The thought flashed across him that they still retained their weapons.

Well, come what might, they were not without means to defend themselves.

That his comrades could put up as stiff a fight as himself, Thad knew full well. In any event, their captors would find that they could not wreak their will on them without a stern resistance.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BOYS BECOME WHITE SLAVES.

The night closed in, and those who had rendered the boys prisoners made no sign.

As for the boys themselves, they remained silent, except for occasional whispered conferences. They did not

dare to raise their voices, for they did not know who might be listening on the other side of the door.

They had heard no sound of any human presence, but they did not think it likely that they would be left unguarded by their captors.

The night was as dark as pitch. They could not see their hands in front of their faces in the cabin.

The silence was profound on board the brig. In the jungle, though, there was noise enough. The night insects and birds filled the air with their buzzing and weird cries.

"I am getting tired of this," whispered Simple Simon at length. "I wish that something would happen."

"Something will happen quite soon enough, Simon," said Thad, in the same subdued tones.

"Well," said Oliver, "I would much prefer a good stiff fight to this inaction and suspense."

They lapsed into silence again, when suddenly Thad exclaimed:

"Hark! do you hear that curious sound?"

They listened, and, sure enough, they heard a strange, regular sighing that seemed to proceed from the outside of the door.

"It sounds like somebody breathing," said Simon.

They listened again. This time they heard a slight squeaking sound.

At the same time the air became filled with a sweet and pungent odor.

Thad felt himself getting drowsy. His brain, however, grasped the significance of the sound they had heard.

Somebody was pumping at a pair of bellows on the other side of the door.

"They are filling the air with some narcotic," thought Thad, sleepily.

"Oh, I am so sleepy," said Simple Simon, with a grunt.

"So am I," said Oliver the next moment. "Good night, boys."

Thad held out as long as he could, but he, too, felt the subtle influence of the stuff sprayed from the bellows stealing over his senses.

He staggered to the porthole of the cabin, which was revealed by a circle of dim, gray light. The fresh air seemed to revive him.

He grasped his cutlass and staggered toward the door. Before he reached it his knees gave way under him.

A noise like that of a thousand waterfalls was in his ears. His senses, desperately as he struggled to retain them, began to leave him.

He sank, at last, to the floor of the cabin. He felt himself falling, falling, falling. Then all grew black.

His last recollection was of feeling his weapons being taken from him.

* * * * *

When the boys regained their senses it was broad daylight. Their place of confinement must have been changed during the night, for they found themselves, when they were able to look about, in what was apparently a room of some "*estancia*" or country house.

There was no ceiling to the place. They looked directly up to the roof of palmetto leaves, common to that part of the tropics.

Near the door were several dishes containing food. A jug of water had also been placed there.

This was a welcome sight, for they were fairly ravenous, not having eaten since they had left the *Tigress*.

For all they knew, the food was poisoned or doctored in some way. Their hunger, however, got the better of their prudence, and they fell to with a will.

The stuff in the dishes was some highly spiced stew, prepared in the Spanish way, and palatable enough. The water, too, was cool and sweet.

After the boys had cleaned the platters, they felt their spirits return, and began to discuss plans for their escape.

In the midst of their talk the door was flung open and a huge negro, carrying a naked cutlass, signed to them to follow him.

It was then that they noticed that their weapons had been taken from them. They were powerless.

They followed the negro across a courtyard and into a large room on the other side to their prison.

The apartment was magnificently furnished. The decorations seemed to have been gathered from every corner of the earth.

There were sumptuous hangings from the Orient and jeweled tapestry from India. The softest of Turkish carpets was on the floor, and the walls were hung with priceless pictures from the brushes of the great masters of painting of the times.

The furniture was of heavy, black oak. In one corner of the place Thad noticed a great stand filled with arms

of all kinds—guns, knives and pistols of every description.

They were ordered—or, rather, signed—to stand at one end of a long table.

For some minutes they waited, and then the doors at the further end of the chamber were swung open and a man entered the room.

At first glance the boys knew him, and a shiver shot down the spine of each one of them.

They realized that their death warrants were as good as signed.

The man they faced was the Spider of Santo Domingo, Don Jose the Cruel.

He regarded them for a moment from under his hanging eyebrows. His burning eyes seemed to pierce them through.

To Thad's mind he seemed more than ever to resemble an evil spider gloating over his prey.

"So," he rasped at length, "Morgan's cubs are in the web at last, eh?"

"We know not what you mean by Morgan's cubs," said Thad, proudly; "we are boys from the British colony of New York."

"Yes," said Oliver, "and proud of it."

The cruel, old don smiled sardonically.

"We are not members of Morgan's crew, but were kidnapped by him," went on Thad.

"A likely story. How was it that you sacked my house at Santo Domingo, then?"

"Because you had enmeshed an innocent girl in your fiendish web," was Thad's bold answer.

"You lie, lad," hissed the old don; "I bought and paid for her with the money I loaned her father."

"Men of honor do not buy or sell women," said Thad.

"You are a bold youth," said Don Jose, regarding him curiously.

"I don't fear you or your threats."

"Have a care, boy. I am an old man, but you can go too far even with me." His parchment-like face took on evil wrinkles as the old don spoke.

"What is it that you would do with us?" asked Thad.

"Well, you went on board my brig uninvited."

Thad gave a start of surprise. It was the old don's brig, then, and the map of the dead Italian was the key to his treasure trove.

"I say," continued the old man, "that no one invited you to visit my ship."

"However, you shall not find me lacking in courtesy.

I am going to invite you to make a long stay with me, and, in order that you may have something to amuse you, I am going to let you do a little jewel hunting in my mine.

"I said I wanted you to make a long stay. I mean it. I want you to remain here the rest of your lives as my white slaves."

A shudder ran through the three boys as they heard, what they could not but regard as their doom, pronounced.

Well did they know that they could hope for no mercy from the yellow-faced, old man who sat at the end of the table. His lips were drawn back in a sardonic smile as he gazed at their troubled faces.

"Do you mean that we are to slave for the rest of our lives in your mines?" cried Thad.

"You show remarkable perception. That is just exactly what I said. For the rest of your natural lives."

Thad's eyes wandered to the stand of weapons he had noticed when they first came into the room. Calling to his comrades to follow him, he made a dash for the place.

He, and Oliver, and Simon each grasped a cutlass and faced their captor.

"We will not die as white slaves of a Spaniard," cried Thad, "but as men."

The old don laughed sardonically at this speech. He clapped his hands together and the curtains at one end of the room fell apart.

They revealed a score of swarthy faced slaves. Each held a gun, which he leveled at the three boys.

A piece of smoking tow was held over the touchhole of each weapon.

"Move one hair's breadth and you are dead men," exclaimed Don Jose, in tones of triumph. "Fools, think you to outwit the Spider in his own lair?"

Further resistance would have been suicidal, and the boys submitted to being bound with the best grace they could.

When their shackles had been made fast, they were ordered to follow the same negro giant who had led them into the old don's presence.

He escorted them once more across the courtyard and through a corridor, whence they emerged, reaching the open air.

A rough cart was in waiting, drawn by two mules. They were ordered to climb into this conveyance. It

was littered inside with straw. On this they laid down and made themselves as comfortable as they could.

After a short time the cart started. All day it jolted along under the urging of its negro driver.

As the day advanced the scenery through which they passed grew wilder and wilder. They were traveling through the mountains. Now they would crawl along the edge of a steep trail, where a misstep of the mules meant death; then they would be in the depths of some rugged canyon.

It was sundown when they halted among a collection of rude huts thatched with palmetto leaves.

A crowd of wild-faced and savage-looking men surrounded the cart in which they rode, and ordered them, by signs, to get out.

The driver handed a document to a man rather better dressed, but no less savage looking, than the others. He read it carefully and then signed to the three boys to follow him.

They did so in silence. To tell the truth, stout as their hearts were, they felt that they had reached the end of their ropes this time.

Thad looked about him. On every side frowned rugged precipices, impossible to scale. They would not have afforded foothold to a goat.

This was on three sides of the place. There was only one way of escape—the road by which they had come.

Thad looked behind him.

An armed sentry was pacing up and down, showing that Don Jose took good care that none of his slaves escaped.

Their guide opened the door of a hut and signed to the boys to enter. As he did so Thad's attention was attracted to a curious structure.

At first glance it resembled a triangular gallows. As he gazed, however, he saw that a rope was rigged through a pulley, at the top of it, and that at this rope two men were pulling.

They laid in the rope hand over hand, and finally the head and shoulders of a man appeared, apparently from the bowels of the earth.

The truth flashed across Thad. This was the shaft of Don Jose's mine, and the man the others had pulled up was one of his slaves.

As the man who had been pulled up the shaft gained the earth, the two men who had handled the rope laid hold of him by either arm and led him toward one of the huts.

They passed close to Thad. The man in the middle walked with a curious uncertain gait, as if he did not know where he was going.

His face was young, but his hair seemed as white as snow.

As they passed, Thad realized what made his walk so uncertain.

The man was blind from his long life of slavery underground.

Thad turned away and followed his companions into the hut with a shudder. As the stout door was closed and barred on the outside he was thinking, thinking how long it would be before they, too, would become sightless, hopeless moles, like the man he had just seen.

CHAPTER VII.

THAD FINDS TWO OLD FRIENDS AND A NEW ONE.

The rising sun was turning the topmost peaks of the savage mountains about their prison to gold when the boys awakened the next morning.

It had been many hours before sleep came to them, and they had examined their prison as thoroughly as the darkness permitted, before at last they sank off into the slumber of exhaustion.

The walls of the place were of hewn rock, cemented together with some substance as hard as steel, or so it seemed to them.

Light and air were admitted through a small window at one end of the place. This was guarded with heavy, iron bars, set deep into the same cement as that used in the walls.

As for the door, it was heavily studded with great nails and hinged and barred on the outside.

While the boys were rubbing their eyes drowsily, not awake yet to the terrible fate that had befallen them, the door was flung open and the man who had locked them up the previous night, and who seemed to be some sort of head man, stood before them.

He signed to them to follow him. He led them to a natural basin formed by a spring that bubbled up among the rocks and signified that they could bathe there if they wished.

They were glad to do so, for their journey in the cart had left them sadly in need of a wash. After a plunge in the cool water they felt much refreshed.

Once more their guide signed to them and they followed him to a rather better-looking hut than the others.

A meal of farina, and some sort of native bread with coffee, "strong enough to stand your spoon up in," said Simple Simon.

They were waited on by a girl of such remarkable beauty that the boys almost forgot the peril of their situation in watching her.

She was barefooted and moved with the supple grace of a wild fawn. But it was not so much her remarkable beauty that astonished the boys as the fact that her hair was fair as spun gold and her complexion as clear and pink and white as if she had been an English girl.

She, also, seemed to take a great interest in the three boys. Thad noticed that she regarded them with eyes full of sympathy.

Once their guide left the room, and she bent down as she passed the New York boy.

"Do not despair," she whispered, "I, too, am English. I will help you, but you must take me with you when you leave this horrible place."

Thad started.

"How came you here?" he asked.

"Hush!" she said, "I will tell you all some other time. It is dangerous to talk here."

Their guide re-entered the room. He seemed to be displeased at finding the girl still present and spoke gruffly to her, upon which she instantly vanished.

He then turned to the boys and beckoned. They followed him to the gallows-like arrangement they had noticed the previous evening.

The same two men were at the rope, and the boys were seized by them and thrust into a kind of basket. The word was given, and they found themselves descending into a black hole.

A fetid odor arose as they dropped lower and lower. It seemed as if they would never stop.

The air grew hotter and hotter. They seemed to be descending into the bowels of the earth.

At last they saw lights flashing below them and heard voices. The next moment the basket hit the earth with a thud.

They were at the bottom of the shaft. A crowd of men, with flaring lamps, fed with cocoanut oil, ran up to them.

The men were all stripped to the waist and smeared with earth and grime. Their matted hair hung in masses about their wild faces. They seemed, in the smoky glare of their lamps, more like demons than human beings.

They scattered among themselves as the boys got out

of the basket. To their horror the boys noticed a terrible thing about all of them.

Where their eyes should have been were mere sightless sockets.

These human moles had lost their sense of sight in the black depths in which they toiled, or else had their eyes burned out as punishment for mutiny.

Several armed men, wearing a kind of uniform, and evidently guards, were attracted by the chatter of these wretched creatures.

These brutes clubbed the helpless slaves right and left with the butts of their heavy guns. The blind wretches fled in every direction, uttering wild cries. They still carried their lamps, and the boys surmised that these must have been given them to enable the guards to locate them in the gloom of the mine.

The man who seemed to be in charge of the guards now stepped up to Thad and his companions.

He addressed them in English.

"Aha!" he exclaimed, holding the torch he carried up to their faces and squinting at them in an irritating manner, "Inglesos. It's a long time since we had any of your breed down here."

"We are Americans," said Thad.

The other laughed and showed his yellow teeth.

"You are all the same down here," he said.

"The last white man here," he went on, "was Capt. Heathdale, of the English ship *Helen*. Don Jose's sea rovers captured her and brought the captain here to help make 'the Spider' rich."

"Where is he now?" asked Thad.

"*Por Dios*, what a question. He is dead."

"Dead?"

"Yes, he strangled himself one night. The dark must have got on his nerves."

"This is horrible," exclaimed Thad.

"You, too, will pray for death," was the reply, "but it won't come. We are more careful now. White slaves do twice the work of the rest. They are too valuable to lose."

"Who is the beautiful white girl I saw up above this morning?"

"That is Helen Heathdale, the captain's daughter. She was only a baby when she was brought up here with him. Her mother killed herself rather than fall into the hands of Don Jose.

"Our women looked after her, and now she has blos-

somed into a girl any man might be proud to call his wife."

"She is indeed beautiful," said Thad.

"I am glad you think so, señor," was the reply, "for I am going to make her my bride."

The boys almost uttered an exclamation of horror as they gazed at the wizened, evil-looking little Spaniard before them.

"We will prevent that marriage, if we can," said Thad, as they were led away.

They were marched through what seemed to them endless passages in the mine till at last they reached a place where the lamps, carried by their guards, showed them there had been recent excavating.

Here they were given picks and told to set to work.

All day long, to them it seemed a year, they toiled, till it seemed, hardy as they were, as if their backs would break.

As they thought that this was to be their lot year in and year out, their hearts sank.

At almost every blow of their picks they uncovered a piece of rock that fairly glistened in the glow of the lamps, so thickly were the jewels imbedded in the earth.

"I wish I could take a pocketful of them to Katrina, in old New York," said Simple Simon, with a desperate attempt at jocularly as they worked.

"No wonder that yellow old spider had half the government of Santo Domingo in his power," rejoined Oliver; "it would take a mighty honest man to withstand a handful of these shiners."

As fast as they dislodged a piece of rock it was seized by a guard and handed to one of the blind slaves, who broke it up.

The don did not trust men, who could use their eyesight, with his treasure. These poor sightless beings could not desire to hide and steal the gems, for they would have no way of disposing of them.

At last, after it seemed to the boys that they could not strike another blow with their picks, the little leader of the guards, whose name they had learned was Barto—or the Black one—came up and announced that they were to return to the surface again.

It was late evening when they emerged from the mouth of the shaft.

While they stood there drinking in the fresh air another load of slaves was hauled to the mouth of the shaft.

Thad started as he thought he recognized them.

They also gave vent to an exclamation of surprise.

The next moment he was shaking hands warmly with Harkness and Amasa Sprigg.

The two men presented a deplorable appearance. They were covered, from head to foot, with mire, and there were blood stains on their faces. Sprigg's head was bandaged.

Thad was startled at the sight they presented. He told them the story of the adventures he and his two companions had met with since they had parted on the deck of the brig.

Harkness explained in a few words that he and Sprigg had been overcome by the crew of the don's craft, who had returned unexpectedly, and had been speedily placed in irons and conveyed to the mines.

Sprigg had met his wound at the hands of the don himself. The Yankee swore vigorously that he would have the head of the don in revenge, even if it cost him his own.

Neither of the men could explain who it was had shut the boys in the cabin or how it had been accomplished so noiselessly.

They had no time for more than the briefest exchange of words regarding their situation before their brutal guards drove them to their huts for the night.

Sprigg and Harkness were confined in the one adjoining that occupied by the boys. Some coarse bread and a jar of water were thrust in after them and the bolts drawn for the night.

"Is this all we get after our day's work?" said Simon, as he ruthfully regarded the fare.

"Well, we won't get fat on it at any rate," said Thad.

"We will all be thin enough to squeeze through those windows in a month," chimed in Oliver, in a melancholy tone.

They fell to on the unpalatable fare. The bread was

so hard and stale and the water so unsavory, however, that, hungry and thirsty as they were, they could not get very far with it.

In despair at getting any sort of a meal off the stuff in their cell they decided to turn in and wait for breakfast. They hoped that that would be a more substantial affair.

So exhausted were they that they soon fell asleep. They lay like logs, not stirring, so completely were they worn out.

Toward morning, however, Thad was awakened by a stone striking his face.

He sat up and listened. All was quiet outside. The moonlight poured in a silvery stream through the window.

The rays showed him his companions sound asleep. Neither of them could have cast the stone.

It must have come from outside.

Who could have thrown it?

As Thad pondered over this the moonlight was suddenly blocked and a head appeared at the barred window.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ESCAPE FROM THE MINE.

Thad at once thought that it was some plot on the part of their captors to assassinate them.

A moment later he was reassured.

A soft voice, which he recognized as that of Helen Heathdale, whispered:

"Are you awake, señor?"

"Yes. Awake and listening," said Thad, hurrying to the window.

"I have no time to talk. Take these and read what is written on the paper."

She thrust her arm through the bars and gave Thad a package, wrapped in parchment.

He undid it eagerly, and something fell out that rang on the hard floor of the cell with a metallic sound.

Thad picked it up. A cry of joy sprang to his lips.

It was a file!

The little piece of finely tempered steel he held in his hand meant liberty to himself and his comrades.

He awoke Oliver and Simple Simon and showed them what he had.

The two lads went nearly crazy with joy. They wanted to start work, but now another difficulty presented itself.

The hut was built on the side of a hill. Consequently, while it had been simple for Helen to reach the window, it was a good eight feet from the floor of the boy's prison.

This stumbling block did not prove an insuperable difficulty, however.

"I will mount on Simon's shoulders," said Thad, "and work with the file."

"When he gets tired we can exchange places. Oliver, you can relieve us at the job."

Thad mounted on the Dutch boy's shoulders and soon made an impression on the first bar. It took a good hour's work, though, before it was cut through sufficiently to break with a stiff tug.

Simon then relieved him, and the Dutch lad soon had the other bar in shape to be removed at the right moment.

This left three more to be done. Oliver polished off one; and Thad had begun on another when the light began to grow gray.

Morning was at hand. That left them still with plenty of work on their hands for the night.

Carefully hiding the precious file, Thad and his comrades waited the coming of their guard.

Once more they were ushered to breakfast in the hut where they had refreshed themselves on the previous day.

Breakfast was a far better meal than their supper had been; so much so that it caused Simon to remark that "Don Jose believed in beginning the day well."

Helen entered the room once while they were at their meal. She looked questioningly at Thad and smiled when he nodded, at his first opportunity, reassuringly at her.

The day before had seemed short to the boys in comparison with the weary drag that the present one proved.

Barto seemed to have conceived a violent dislike for them. Thad would have given anything to have been able to knock him down, but to have done so would have been to forfeit their hope of escape.

At last the time came for them to return to the surface. Barto had left some time before.

"He is up to some mischief," said Thad, as he noticed him quit the mine.

What that mischief was they were soon to find out. As they climbed out of the basket, in which they had been hauled up to the mouth of the shaft, they became aware that something was going on.

Several horses were picketed about the settlement. There were a number of gayly dressed Spaniards hanging about, too.

The house, in which Helen lived, was draped in bunting and gay colors. As the boys marched past it to the cell a piece of parchment fluttered to Thad's feet. It had been thrown from an upper story.

He managed to pick it up unobserved. When they were in the cell he read it.

"Señor," it ran, "they intend to marry me to-night to Barto. If you can escape to-night, save me from this terrible fate. That is, if you can do so without imperiling your own lives."
HELEN HEATHDALE."

Thad showed the letter to the other two.

"We will save her from that yellow brute," exclaimed Thad. "Think of what a terrible fate it would be for her to be married to such a monster."

In this resolution he was backed up by the other two boys.

Thad then told his plans, which were simple. It was fortunate for their success that so many people had been invited to the wedding. The horses they had ridden in on would be the very thing for the fugitives.

They would first, however, release Sprigg and Harkness. It was then his idea to make, with the aid of Harkness' map, for the spot where they had left the brig and overcome the small force that would be left on board.

The five of them, he thought, would be easily able to work Don Jose's craft.

This plan gave the boys renewed energy. They sawed through the bar Oliver had begun on in a few moments.

Thad had almost disposed of the last one when a terrible thing happened.

The file broke!

The boys were in despair. They tried to move the bar, but in vain.

It was impossible to squeeze through the window without getting out all the bars. It seemed too bad to have the escape which was within their grasp wrenched away from them by such an accident.

Thad tried to work with the broken bits, but it was no use. He could make no impression on the tough iron.

For the fiftieth time Simon exerted all his great strength and then uttered a cry of triumph.

The bar moved. He strained his muscles to the breaking point.

Never before had he pushed his great power to the limit.

The bar gave way with a crash that precipitated Thad, on whose shoulders he sat, and himself, to the floor of the cell.

They were up in a moment, though, and could hardly suppress a cheer.

The way to freedom lay before them.

The most difficult part of their task, though, was yet to be accomplished.

Simon was the first to climb out of the place. He was followed by Oliver, who got a boost from Thad's shoulders.

Then the Dutch lad caught Oliver by the legs, and, when Thad had caught the latter's outstretched hands, they hauled the New York boy up to freedom.

There could not have been a more favorable night for their enterprise. Dark clouds obscured the moon. It was the beginning of the rainy season, and it was unlikely that the weather would clear before morning.

The wedding feast, too, was in full swing. Guitars were twanging away like mad, and there was a great deal of singing and much clinking of glasses.

"We had better wait till they have drunk a little more wine," said Thad.

They sat down in the shadow of the hut and waited, chatting in subdued tones, until the merriment should grow so boisterous as to enable them to put their plan into execution.

At last the noise became tremendous. The wedding

guests were evidently drinking quite as much, and several of them more, than was good for them.

Cautiously the boys crept out of the shelter of the house.

Thad led them to the hut in which Sprigg and Harkness were confined.

The bars were not padlocked, and the sentry, who was supposed to keep a strict watch on the place, had succumbed to the wine.

The coast was clear.

Thad let down the bars and Sprigg and Harkness came out.

They did not know the boys at first, so dazed were they at the turn affairs had taken.

As soon as they realized that they were free, though, they thanked Thad warmly and asked him how he had contrived it. He told them in as few words as possible, since time was precious.

The Spaniards, to judge by the noise, were getting more drunk every moment.

Thad crept to the open shed under which the horses were tied and slipped all their halters. They did not want to be delayed when the moment came for flight.

The horses, whose mangers were filled with hay, never thought of stirring from their food.

Now all was in readiness for the final stroke.

They waited in the shadow of the horse shed for Helen to put in an appearance. Harkness and Sprigg had at first been opposed to taking the girl, but later they had agreed to share their hopes of freedom with her.

At last the door opened and a slender white figure appeared.

It was Helen Heathdale.

Thad stepped up to her.

"We are ready," he said.

"I knew you would not forget me," she said, simply, offering him her hand.

She seemed outwardly calm, but Thad could tell by the look in her eyes that she was excited at the thought of what lay before them.

"You will find weapons under the hay," she whispered, "I have put out a pistol for myself. I can shoot—a little."

They found that the brave girl had provided plenty of weapons for the whole party.

With a cutlass in his hand and a pistol at his belt, Thad felt like himself again.

They mounted the horses—there was one with a side-saddle for Helen—and rode out of the barn. Thad had tied wisps of hay round the feet of their mounts, but even then they made some noise.

Nor were the sentries as sleepy as they supposed. They had only ridden a few yards toward the entrance to the settlement when they were challenged.

"Halt!" cried a man who stood in their path. "Give an account of yourselves."

Thad whipped out his pistol and fired.

"That's for our passport!" he cried, as the man fell under his horse's feet.

As they dashed past the house a figure ran out.

It was Barto, the ill-favored driver of the white slaves.

He planted himself directly in the path of the galloping horses.

He swayed drunkenly as he leveled a pistol and fired at the oncoming cavalcade.

Helen uttered a cry. The bullet had grazed her temple.

"Ride him down!" yelled Harkness, putting spurs to his horse.

The maddened animal dashed forward.

In a flash Barto was trampled beneath its feet.

His death cry rang in their ears as they tore down the trail leading to the river.

The next moment the hammer of flying hoofs in their rear was borne to their ears.

They were pursued!

Thad cursed his stupidity for not having turned the other horses loose.

But it was too late for regrets.

CHAPTER IX.

DON JOSE'S BRIG PROVES USEFUL.

There was no danger of missing the road. In that wild country there was only one way of getting from place to place.

They knew if they followed the road they were on they would reach the river.

What they would find when they got there was more than any of them cared to consider.

A thousand things might have happened.

The brig might be gone.

In that case they faced certain death.

At the hands of Don Jose they knew it would not be an easy death. Indeed, torture would almost certainly be their lot.

They covered the ground in a quarter of the time the mules had taken. It was still dark when they became aware, by the dank feeling in the air, that they were approaching the river.

Once or twice they had stopped to listen to see if the pursuers still clung to the chase.

Each time the clatter of hoofs in the rear had told them they were followed.

The fugitives were quite close to the river when the moon broke from behind a cloud.

Simon uttered a cry as the silvery light made things almost as bright as day.

The brig was there!

The white light of the tropic moon revealed her slender topmasts rearing themselves above the luxuriant jungle growth.

The sight gave them all renewed spirit. The first part of their dangerous plan had gone through successfully. True, much still remained to be done, but they felt encouraged.

They dismounted from their horses and set them free.

"We have burned our bridges behind us now," said Thad, as he assisted Helen through the tropical undergrowth.

The brig lay silent and dark on the river. There seemed to be not a soul on board her.

The fugitives ran up the plank that connected her with the shore. They gained the deck without any interference.

The brig was deserted!

Thad's heart beat high with hope.

"I believe we will come out all right," he said.

"Hark!" cried Helen.

They all listened. Their pursuers were drawing nearer.

But another and a strange sound was mingled with the rattle of the flying hoofs.

It was a wierd sort of scream. It rose and fell in regular waves.

As he heard it Harkness' face turned white in the moonlight.

"What is it?" asked Thad.

"The very worst peril we have faced yet, Thad.

"It's the man-eating Caribs. I know their war cry!"

"Let us shake out the topsails and get some way on the ship while we have the time," said Sprigg.

The two men sprang into the rigging and cut loose the lashings with their knives.

They sheeted home as they had never done before.

Sprigg came down a backstay to the deck like a flash.

"You take the helm," he cried to Harkness, as the second mate followed him.

He ran forward with the agility of a monkey, and, drawing his knife, cut loose the brig's moorings.

Instantly she began to slip through the water, the current helping her.

It was none too soon. But a few yards of water were between her and the landing to which she had been tied when a crowd of dark figures dashed out of the jungle.

Some of them were armed. These contented themselves with firing at the brig. This did no harm to the fugitives and but little to the brig.

Others, however, were not so easily to be shaken off.

They leaped into canoes, and, uttering the terrible Carib yell, paddled furiously after the brig.

The wind was not fresh enough to give her much way, and the canoes began to overhaul her.

From his position on the stern Thad watched them. There was no question but they were gaining on the brig.

Their leader stood upright in the foremost boat flourishing a big spear.

Thad took careful aim and fired. The man with the spear threw his arms above his head and toppled over into the river.

His death seemed not to have the least effect on the others. They did not stop to recover his body, but, instead, paddled all the more furiously.

Sprigg held the wheel with one hand and fired at the Caribs with the other.

Harkness and the two other boys kept their pistol barrels hot.

Not a shot was wasted.

Still the Caribs paddled stolidly on. They evidently thought they could overpower the brig, and were determined to do it.

The wind freshened a bit, and the brig had begun to pull away from the savages, when there was a jarring shock that made her quiver in every plank.

Sprigg dropped the helm.

"I guess it's all up now," he said, laconically; "we have struck a shoal."

"Cannot we get her off?" asked Thad, to whom this unexpected accident was a bitter disappointment.

"Not unless we tow her off with boats, an' there ain't much chance of doing that with those yellow devils in the boat behind you."

"You mean we are stuck here?"

"That's about it, yes."

Those in the canoes had been quick to see their plight.

They set up a savage yell of triumph.

"They mean fight!" said Oliver.

"We ought to be a match for a lot of measly Caribs," said Simon.

"Do not despise them, boy," said Harkness, "they ain't got much manners, but they can fight like bulldogs."

The first of the Carib canoes hooked onto the stern of the brig by means of a kind of grappling iron the savages carried.

"We must fight them off at all hazards," said Sprigg. "They are in the pay of the Spaniards and get a price for every escaped slave they capture."

The Yankee seized an oar from the gig as he spoke, and, as a touselled head appeared over the rail of the poop, he brought his weapon down on it with all his force.

The Carib dropped without a sound. They could hear his body splash as it struck the water.

This did not avail them for long, however. Soon the other canoes had hooked on alongside.

The Caribs poured on the decks from every side. With the small force they carried, it was impossible to guard more than one place at a time.

Gradually the white men were beaten back. Poor Helen was in terror. She clinched her teeth, though, and asked Thad if there was anything she could do for him.

"Nothing," said Thad, with a smile, "but to take care of yourself."

Several of the Carib spears had lodged in the deck about them. As yet, however, not one of the party of white men had been wounded.

This was simply due to good luck.

They loaded and fired as fast as they were able, and several of the Caribs lay dead on the decks.

The white men were so tremendously outnumbered that the contest could not last long under these conditions.

Sprigg was struck in the shoulder by a spear. For a moment they feared the Yankee had been seriously hurt.

The plucky seaman, however, drew out the spear point from his shoulder and went on fighting. It was the beginning of the end, though. They were driven at last to take refuge in the cabin.

Here the Caribs would speedily have finished them off but an unexpected thing happened.

As Thad opened the door of the cabin something rushed out with a savage scream.

It looked like a man, but it ran with a curious crouch.

It was the great gorilla that had been so cruelly beaten.

The creature took no notice of the white men, but ran straight for the foremost Carib.

The savage screamed in deadly fear as he felt himself lifted like a child in the monster's huge, hairy arms.

His comrades stood still without making a move to help him. They were paralyzed with fear at the awful appearance of the huge and savage ape.

The monster whirled the Carib round his head as if he had been a feather.

Then he hurled him far out into the stream. A yell of

dismay went up from the other savages as they saw their tribesman's fate.

With wild cries of terror, they broke and ran, followed by the great beast.

Soon they were paddling away from the ship they firmly believed was haunted by a devil, with the best speed they could command.

The gorilla seemed to know Thad, or, at least, it did not offer any violence to him. At the others he growled savagely as he once more sought his lair in the cabin.

The last Carib canoe was hardly out of sight when a stronger wind filled the brig's topsails.

Urged by its force, she hesitated, stopped, then hesitated again, and, at last, slipped off the sand bank into deep water.

As day broke they found themselves once more in the natural basin. They were separated from the open sea only by a curtain of tropical creepers.

Sprigg ordered the sweeps got out and the sails sheeted home.

The boys and Harkness manned the great oars, while the *Centipede's* captain held the helm.

They made the passage without accident.

"Sir Henry will be glad to see us again," said Sprigg.

But a surprise was in store for them.

When they had passed the opening of the river and looked once more on the open sea they fairly gasped in amazement.

The two ships they had left anchored there had disappeared!

They scanned the horizon eagerly. It was of no avail. Morgan had gone!

CHAPTER X.

FRESH PERILS CONFRONT THEM.

"Waal, that beats all," was Sprigg's comment on the strange disappearance of the two vessels.

"Darn it all, they took my *Centipede* with 'em, too. As trim a craft as a man would want to sail."

"No use crying over spilt milk, captain," said Thad, who had been chatting with the two boys and Helen.

"That's right," said Harkness, "and, by the way, cap-

tain, just cock your eye on that cloud over there. What do you make of it?"

Sprigg looked at the clouds indicated by the boatswain.

"It means dirty weather," he said, after a long scrutiny. "As we are so short handed we had better shorten sail before she hits us."

"How soon will that be?" asked Thad.

"That's hard to tell; maybe in an hour, maybe not till night, but it is going to blow, all right."

They soon had the ship snugged down, with a reefed fore and mainsail and a couple of small head sails.

Sprigg looked aloft approvingly.

"She'll ride out a hurricane with that canvas," he said to Thad.

"Where do you suppose Morgan has gone?"

"I know not. It must have been something serious to make him desert us like this."

"Where are we bound?"

"Port Royal, in Jamaica."

Sprigg was going to add something more, when his attention was attracted by Harkness.

The boatswain was excitedly pointing to windward. They followed his gaze, and saw a large ship beating up for them.

"That's not the *Tigress* or the *Centipede*," said Sprigg, when he had taken a good look at them through the telescope they had found in the brig's cabin.

"She's got too many men on her decks to be a merchant. She's either a man-of-war or a free rover. Either would be dangerous to us now."

"Anyway, she seems to be anxious to overhaul us," said Harkness. "Look at the way she is clapping on sail."

Indeed, the strange vessel had clothed her spars in a cloud of canvas and was tearing through the water at a rate that promised to lay her alongside the brig in a very short time.

She was a long, low, rakish-looking craft. Her three masts were barque rigged. Along her sides were two rows of ports.

Thad noticed these.

"Do you not think that she may be a man-of-war?" he asked Sprigg.

The Yankee skipper had been watching the strange craft very carefully for some time. He was evidently puzzled at her appearance.

"No," he replied to Thad, "she is not a naval vessel. Do you not notice her patched sails, and the set of her masts? No navy captain in the world would stay his topmasts so far back."

The barque drew nearer and nearer. Helen approached Thad and asked if he apprehended any danger.

The New York boy responded that there was no danger. He did not dare to tell her what he now began to suspect, that the vessel might be a buccaneer intent on overhauling them.

Helen watched the strange craft as she came rushing on.

"What a glorious sight she is!" exclaimed the beautiful girl. "How her sails fit, and how white they seem."

Sprigg interrupted her with an exclamation. Thad looked up and saw that the eyes of the skipper and Harkness were fixed on the other vessel.

He followed their gaze, and instantly perceived what had attracted their attention.

The barque had braced her topsails and was going about on a tack that, at her rate of sailing, would bring her right down on the brig.

Another and more ominous sign was that at the same time her ports were opened and the muzzles of several brass guns were plainly visible.

"She means business," said Thad.

"That she does," replied Oliver.

Just then one of the guns of the stranger vessel was discharged. The shot whistled over their heads and fell into the sea.

"Just saying 'How do you do?'" said Simple Simon, who was as interested as anyone else in the barque.

"This is bound to be no laughing matter," said Thad. "That fellow is going to board us and make us give him some tribute?"

"And if we cannot?"

"Why, then we will walk the plank, I suppose."

"Upon my word, you are cheerful," said Simple Simon.

"You want to send flowers when there is no funeral."

"I wonder what Sprigg intends to do," said Thad. "It is high time he was heaving to if he means to do so."

They were not left long in doubt as to Sprigg's plans. The Yankee skipper came rolling along the deck at a pace that showed he was in a hurry.

"What do you intend to do, captain?" asked Thad.

"Run if we can show her our heels, fight if we may not," was the brisk reply.

"Harkness," he continued, "you had better show some colors. There are sure to be plenty of all nations in the flag locker of such a vessel as this."

"You intend to show our colors?" asked Thad.

Sprigg grinned.

"Well, not exactly our colors," he said, as Harkness came back with the flags.

"Just as you said," he remarked to Sprigg. "Here is the flag of every known nation."

"Then run up the British flag," exclaimed the Yankee. "I feel that I owe the old country something. King Charles gave Sir Henry his title."

The union jack fluttered from the peak.

As its gay folds were filled by the breeze the other craft, which was now but a short distance off, broke out a flag.

Sprigg uttered a cry of dismay as she did so.

Her flag was the sinister emblem of the sea robbers.

The skull and cross-bones!

"It's all up now," said Simple Simon, as his eyes took in the nature of the barque.

"What are we going to do?" asked Oliver.

"They will certainly board us, and, probably, as she is such a smart craft, they will seize the brig," said Thad.

Helen, who had overheard the last remark, uttered a low cry.

"Then it is a pirate vessel," she said to Thad, reproachfully.

"I fear so," replied Thad.

"Why could you not have told me so at first?"

"I did not wish to alarm you till it became certain that the barque did indeed menace us."

"Do not fear, Mistress Helen," put in Harkness, who had come up to them while they were talking. "We will not let any harm come to you, whatever happens."

Suddenly they were showered with splinters.

A moment later the heavy boom of the stranger's gun reached their ears.

The barque had fired on them.

There was no doubt now that she meant to board them.

"Had we not better heave to?" asked Thad of Sprigg.

"We will have to," was the reply, "but first we must finish some work."

Thad had noticed that the captain and Harkness had been very busy in moving barrels of powder from the magazine.

These they had placed in the cabins under the poop deck.

Thad supposed that they did so to obviate the danger of an explosion. A shot below the water line of the brig would have wrought havoc, had it struck the magazine.

There only remained two or three more to be brought on deck. In this work Thad lent a hand.

He noticed that Sprigg was very particular in the disposal of the barrels of explosives. He also was particular in arranging a long fuse, one end of which he laid along the rail of the poop.

These preparations completed, he sprang into the rigging.

"We are all ready for them now," he said.

"Ready, but not anxious," said Simon, with a sickly grin.

The boys and Harkness manned the braces and swung the yards aback. Sprigg reefed the topsails in rough and ready fashion and the little brig was soon tumbling about on the waves without any headway on her.

What Sprigg's object had been in the disposal of the powder was a puzzle to Thad. That worthy, when asked about it, gave enigmatical replies.

However, it was no time to speculate.

The barque, when the brig had backed her topsails, had also hove to.

Thad saw two boats lowered from her high sides and a crowd of men tumble into them.

Sprigg, who had been watching the vessel very closely, suddenly gave vent to an exclamation.

"I thought I knew that ship!" he said.

"You recognize her?" asked Thad.

"Yes. She is the *Mary Rose*, formerly one of Morgan's fleet, but stolen from him by a trick on the part of her captain, John Sawkins."

The boats drew nearer.

Thad grasped his cutlass.

Oliver held a huge, old-fashioned gun.

It looked capable of costing the lives of half a dozen men.

As for Simon, he flourished a pistol.

As the boats drew astern, Oliver lay flat on the poop deck. This ruse would keep the boarders from seeing him till they were right on him.

It was a thrilling moment as they waited while the buccaneers boarded the brig and advanced to the poop steps.

Oliver's great gun spoke and, with a wild cry, one of the buccaneers dropped backward.

The next moment a swarm of them appeared on the brig's poop.

Thad's cutlass swung right and left. Oliver and Simon, too, were cutting and slashing.

A great bearded man made a rush at Thad.

It was Sawkins himself.

He carried a huge cutlass.

"You young jackanapes!" he bellowed, "I'll cleave you in half!"

Thad parried the terrific blow Sawkins aimed at him.

His skill as a swordsman had never stood him in better stead.

Sparks flew from their steel, so furiously did they fight.

But Sawkins' strength was no match for Thad's skill.

Slowly the buccaneer chief was forced to the rail. He was on the defensive now, fighting for his life.

All at once Thad cut in under his opponent's guard and the buccaneer fell back with a groan, Thad's steel in his heart.

The buccaneers, furious at the defeat of their chief, were about to wreak summary vengeance on Thad when a strange thing happened.

"Forward, Thad, and the rest of you! Forward for your lives!"

It was Amasa Sprigg's voice.

The Yankee, followed by Harkness, leaped from the poop and ran forward.

At the same moment the poop seemed to be hoisted skyward.

There was a terrific explosion.

Thad and his companions were thrown to the deck by the concussion.

Not one of the men who had crowded the stern remained alive.

Capt. Sprigg had planted his mine, the powder from the magazine, carefully.

At the right moment he had fired the train, and it had done its work.

Suddenly Thad cried:

"Are we not lower in the water than we were?"

They all looked. There was no question about it. The brig was lower.

Sprigg's mine had torn off the entire stern, and the brig was slowly, but none the less surely, settling.

They stood on the deck of a sinking ship!

CHAPTER XI.

HELEN FINDS HER FATHER.

Their position was a terrible one, their only hope being to take to the boats.

In that case, though, there was the buccaneer vessel to be reckoned with.

It was almost certain that some of the sea rovers remained on board. If that were so, they would certainly seek vengeance for the death of their comrades.

"There's only one thing to do," said Sprigg, at length.

"And that is?" said Thad.

"To take to the boats."

Harkness cast off the tackles and they all got into the long boat. It was high time. The brig's rail was nearly level with the water.

They had only pulled a few boats' lengths from the sinking craft when a terrible cry rang out.

"It's a woman!" exclaimed Thad.

"No, it isn't," answered Sprigg. "It is the same cry we heard the night the gorilla was beaten, up the river.

"We thought it was a woman then."

Sprigg pointed to the brig by way of answer.

The gorilla was sitting on the rail; its arms were stretched out appealingly toward those on the boat.

It seemed to reproach them for having forgotten it.

There were plenty of arms in the boat, pistols and swords. Thad picked up one of the former.

"Shall I put the poor creature out of its misery?" he said.

"No, no," cried Helen; "don't do that, Master Thad. Can we not save it?"

"I fear not. The brig will sink in a few seconds. If we were near her we would be drawn down in the whirlpool she will make."

As he spoke the brig's bow raised high in the air. She seemed to leap out of the water.

The next moment she plunged to the bottom, bearing with her the great gorilla.

Its dying scream rang in their ears.

They felt awestruck when they found that they were indeed alone on the ocean without a good ship under their feet.

Both Sprigg and Harkness knew the horrors of an open boat in those waters.

The Yankee skipper broke the silence that had fallen upon them.

"We must have a ship," he said.

Thad stared at him.

"How are we to get it?" he asked.

"Take it."

"From where or whom?"

"From the hands of those who have now got her."

"You mean the buccaneer vessel?"

Sprigg nodded.

"It's an impossibility," said Thad.

"Not at all. We are well armed and stout hearted. Sawkins' crew are the scum of the earth. What they have already seen must have taken some courage from them."

"It might be done," said Thad.

"There cannot be very many of them left," exclaimed Oliver, "after Capt. Sprigg's mine exploded."

"True," said Harkness. "I believe that, wild as the plan appears, we may be able to carry it out."

"What about the girl, though?" asked Thad.

Helen spoke up.

"I do not fear. At least we can but die. That would be preferable to the horrors of death from thirst in an open boat."

The brave girl's words affected all of them. Besides, what she said was true. In their hurry to lower the boat they had not stocked her with food or water.

There was no alternative. They must capture the pirate bark or perish miserably by starvation.

They all gripped their arms determinedly.

As the boat drew near to the hove-to barque, they saw that their approach was being carefully watched by a score of dusky-faced buccaneers.

"Twenty to five," said Thad, as he counted them. "It is long odds, but we may win."

The men on the barque did not make any move to prevent the approach of the boat until she was right alongside.

Then they fired a volley from their old-fashioned guns that filled her as full of holes as a sieve.

It was a miracle that no one in the boat was hit but Simon. The Dutch lad received a slight flesh wound.

"We must get hooked onto the main chains before she sinks," said Sprigg.

"Do you row, and Harkness bail her, while Oliver, Simon and I pick out a few of those fellows," said Thad.

The boy stood up in the stern and fired. He saw a man drop. At the same moment Oliver and Simon pulled the trigger and two more of the pirates fell.

"Good work," said Thad. "We will be alongside before they have time to reload. They must have thought we were not going to give them a fight or they would have sunk us before we came alongside."

"Well, they have found out their mistake by this time," said Sprigg, as he made fast the boat's painter to the main chains of the barque.

It was high time they left the boat. Fast as Harkness had worked at bailing her, she shipped water faster than he could get rid of it.

Thad had just time to draw Helen to a place of comparative safety when the yawl sank.

Their position now was desperate, since they were far outnumbered by the crew of the barque.

Even without the men who had been killed, their enemies still had a force to fight that rendered it almost an impossibility for our friends to succeed in beating them off.

There was no help for it, though. The men gripped their cutlasses in their teeth and climbed to the deck. Helen they left crouched in the main chains. Her position there at least precluded the chance of a stray bullet hitting her.

Besides, if the ruffians did not see the woman, it might be possible to parley with them.

As their heads appeared over the rail the men on the deck made a rush for the adventurers.

Thad's cutlass whirled about his head in desperate fashion. He accounted for three of their attackers. Sprigg and Harkness were standing, their backs to the foremast, withstanding the onslaught of at least ten of the buccaneers.

Oliver and Simple Simon fought at their leader's side. They made a brave fight of it, but the odds were too great.

Thad felt his arm growing weary as he cut and slashed with all his strength.

Suddenly a wild cry was heard.

A half naked figure sprang among the fighting men, and, seizing a cutlass from one of the dead men, placed himself at Thad's side.

Who he was the New York boy had no idea. He was a man of middle age and seemed to be a seafaring man. This was all Thad, in his stress, had time to note.

"Kill them all," cried the newcomer, "the bloodthirsty wretches. I cannot tell you the misery I have suffered at their hands."

Sprigg was in desperate straits. His cutlass had been whirled from his hand by a skilled swordsman.

The Yankee was fighting with his fists. A moment more and he was felled by a blow from a buccaneer's cutlass.

At the same time Thad felt himself seized from behind. He slashed desperately, but he was overmatched.

Five minutes later the fight was over and the men who had escaped death on the brig were in the hands of the buccaneers.

A sort of council of war was held by the ruffians. The prisoners, bound to the mast, could hear their excited tones. It was evident, from the heat of their manner, that there were two parties of them.

From what Thad could hear, he judged that one of the parties was in favor of death and the other had some other plan. What this plan was he could not hear.

At last a man who seemed to be in a position of authority among them stepped up to the prisoners.

"We have decided on your fate," he said.

"What is it to be?" asked Thad, anxious to put an end to the suspense.

"That is not for you to know yet," was the reply.

The man who had addressed them turned away.

The strange being who had come to Thad's assistance, and whom, of course, the buccaneers had made a prisoner, spoke.

"They will make us walk the plank," he said.

Thad turned to him.

"You are not one of their crew?" he inquired.

This strange being interested Thad.

"No, thank God," was the reply, "I have none of their deeds of blood on my conscience."

"Then who are you?"

"My name is Heathdale."

Thad started.

"How came you here?"

"That is a long story. Briefly, I was captured by a bloodthirsty wretch, Don Jose by name."

"Your story interests me. I know the man."

"Ah, then you, too, have suffered. To know him is to suffer. But I will continue. His cut-throat crew dragged me from the ship I was captain of and made prisoners of myself and daughter.

"My wife killed herself, and I would have followed her to the grave had I been given the opportunity.

"My daughter, a child just able to toddle, and myself were taken to the mine whence this fiend in human form gets his wealth.

"For fifteen long years I toiled in the dark shafts of the mine. How my eyesight was spared I never understood. I was never allowed to see my daughter, and one day, when I asked for her, they told me she was dead.

"I thought I should go mad. I had lived in the hope of one day meeting her again. I had made no attempt to escape for that reason. So it had come about that I was trusted above all the other slaves.

"One day I was sent to the river to get some supplies from the brig. I never came back. A Carib to whom I had done some little act of kindness gave me his dugout. I drifted and rowed down the river.

"They pursued me, but I eluded them. To do so I had to pass days and nights without sleep. To have been caught napping would have been fatal.

"The result was that I fell asleep from exhaustion in the dugout. How long I slept I know not. When I awoke, however, I was far out at sea. The river current had drifted me there.

"I endured terrible tortures from thirst and hunger. Finally one day I sighted a sail. The ship picked me up. It was this accursed craft. I did not care whether I lived or died. They made a slave of me. I thought my spirit was broken till to-day, when I saw that you were men and not monsters like these villains.

"Now that it is all over I care very little. I have nothing to live for."

Thad listened to the man's narrative with wonder in his heart. He saw now that the tale of Heathdale's suicide was a patched-up one, intended to frighten them. Now he spoke.

"Do not say so, sir. Your daughter lives."

The other looked at him beseechingly.

"Do not jest with me. She is dead."

"Not so. At this moment she is not a hundred yards away."

Thad told him all. Heathdale's face took on an expression of new life as he listened.

When Thad concluded his story of the girl's rescue the captain turned to him warmly.

"You have given me a new heart," he said. "We will not die tamely. If we are to die we can fight."

Thad nodded. There was one question agitating his mind. Was the girl where they had left her?

He was certain that none of the buccaneers had noticed her presence in the boat, or they would have spoken about her ere this. The only thing was how long could she stay in her perilous position.

Thad had noticed for some time that the buccaneers had been very busy with the construction of a sort of platform. It seemed to be completed, for they all gathered about it and examined it.

To Thad's astonishment their next move was to rig a block and tackle and lower it over the side.

The man who appeared to be their leader then stepped up to the prisoners. He doffed his hat with a low, mocking bow.

"I will now tell you what your fate will be," he said. "You are to be cast adrift on the Caribbean on the raft we have just made."

Despite Thad's high courage, he turned pale. This was indeed worse than any outright death.

He turned to Heathdale.

"What are we to do about Helen?" he said. "We cannot leave her here alone."

"There is no need to. I am going with you."

It was Helen Heathdale who spoke.

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE RAFT.

The sun was setting. The level rays of the dying day turned the waters of the Caribbean to gold.

There was not a breath of wind to temper the furnace-like heat. The sea was like glass. Not a ripple marred its placid surface.

Hull down on the horizon was a barque, the *Mary Rose*.

There was one other thing afloat as far as the eye could see. It was a raft.

On it were Helen Heathdale, Thad and his two comrades and Sprigg, Harkness and Capt. Heathdale.

They had been placed aboard the raft and cut loose.

Sprigg had lost his head when he realized that the buccaneers really meant to put their cruel threat into execution.

As the *Mary Rose* swung round her yards and stood away the mocking laughs of the brutal marooners had rung out.

The sight of their brutal mirth maddened even Thad, who kept his head far better than the others.

Besides, he had to help Capt. Heathdale attend to his daughter, who had fainted when the true nature of their situation dawned upon her.

In the first flush of her joy at regaining her father—for Thad had lost no time in reuniting the two—the girl had cared little for anything but to be near Capt. Heathdale.

The fact that they were to be set adrift in the Caribbean on a frail raft meant little to her.

It was not until the *Mary Rose* had slipped away from them and they were alone on the frail raft that she realized what their position really meant.

They were without either food or water. Already the terrible pangs of thirst were making themselves felt.

It seemed, indeed, that they were doomed to a fate more terrible even than death at the hands of the buccaneers.

Harkness sat apart, his head buried in his hands. He paid no attention to Sprigg, who raved like a lunatic.

"Don't carry on like that," Thad said to the Yankee. "Curses will do no good."

The boy was afraid that, when Helen recovered from her faint, she would hear the Yankee's blasphemies and be terrified.

Sprigg turned a wild eye on him.

"My lad," he cried, "I'll give over if it will shock the lady, but give me a pistol and I'll scatter my brains!"

Thad shook his head.

"Don't give up hope like that," he said.

Harkness groaned.

"Even Harry Morgan never did a thing like this," he said.

"The vengeance of God light on their heads," cried Sprigg. "That's the word of a dying man."

The demented Yankee ran to the side of the raft and would have cast himself overboard but for Simon.

The Dutch lad clasped the demented skipper and pinned his arms to his side.

There were one or two pieces of rope on the raft, and with these the insane man was tied. After being bound, he lay silent on the raft.

Helen opened her eyes shortly afterward. Her gaze fell on her father and she clasped her arms about his neck.

A tear stole down the grizzled cheek of the old mariner. It seemed so hard that, when he had found happiness after his years of suffering, it was to be wrenched from his grasp by relentless fate.

"Don't cry, father," exclaimed the girl, as she saw his emotion.

"After all, we are better off here than aboard that terrible craft."

She pointed in the direction of the *Mary Rose*. The buccaneer vessel was hull down on the horizon. She seemed a mere speck.

As she gazed, Helen exclaimed, in a terrified tone:

"Look! Look! What is that?"

"Helen, what is the matter?" said her father. He feared she, too, had lost her mind.

"Don't you see it? There—beyond the barque!"

Thad looked, and what he saw he never forgot.

Beyond the black speck made by the barque was what seemed a huge, black pillar.

It reached from sea to sky, and twisted and writhed like a snake.

It traveled at a tremendous rate. Straight for the barque it came.

"It's a waterspout!" cried Harkness.

Sprigg's curse, it seemed, had fallen on the doomed barque.

The watchers on the raft beheld, with bated breath, the disappearance of the buccaneer vessel.

The great moving pillar of water seemed to have swallowed her up.

But this did not break it up. It came rushing over the placid sea at the speed of a hurricane.

It moved with a noise like thunder.

They all watched it. Nobody spoke a word. They were like birds fascinated by a snake.

Thad was the first to notice their own danger.

The great twisting column was coming straight for them, coming with the velocity of a cannon ball.

"We are doomed!" cried Helen.

The girl fell on her knees and prayed aloud. The others stood, with bare heads bowed, and listened to the sacred words.

The air grew black as night and hot as a blast from an open furnace door.

Great drops of rain fell.

Those on the raft stretched out their hands and lifted their faces to the grateful moisture.

It was hot, almost unbearable, nevertheless it was water, and they were grateful for it.

On and on came the waterspout.

They had no oars, or they might have pulled out of its path. All they could do was to sit and wait.

Thad felt his senses swoon as, with a roar, it swept past them.

Something had diverted its course, and they had been saved from a terrible death.

As it rushed on they heard dreadful cries of terror and appeal.

The ill-fated crew of the *May Rose* were, with their ship, being whirled to death.

Their death cries rang in Thad's ears long afterward.

It was the judgment of Heaven on a wicked crew of cut-throats.

The passing of the waterspout had made a tremendous sea, and the raft pitched till it threatened to throw them off.

The waves soon quieted down, however, and night fell on the Caribbean.

The hours passed with leaden feet.

Never, so it seemed to Thad, would morning dawn.

Helen slept, but the rest of them could not close an eye.

Their pangs of thirst were terrible.

They would have drunk the sea water, but they knew that that meant madness.

Sprigg sang at the top of his voice. Old sea songs he roared out till it seemed as if he would split his throat.

Two questions were uppermost in the minds of all of them.

How long could they hold out?

When would they sight a ship?

The Caribbean, at that day, was a solitary ocean, at least that part of it where the raft was drifting.

The buccaneers had driven the galleons to take a more southerly course.

There seemed to be, indeed, no hope.

As for how long they might stand it, Thad could form no estimate.

The night was comparatively cool, but he knew that when the sun rose their sufferings would be intense.

Thad and his comrades had been in tight places before, but never in one that seemed so absolutely hopeless.

"How would you like a lemonade?" asked Simon, with a ghastly effort at gayety.

"Be quiet, Simon," said Thad, "this is no time for joking."

The Dutch boy looked hurt for a moment, then his customary good nature returned.

"I am so thirsty," he groaned, "and, if we can't get something to drink, the next best thing is to think about it."

"Better not think of it at all," said Oliver.

Day broke at last. As the light grew strong enough they looked eagerly about them.

They could not scan a sail.

Even Thad felt his heart sicken when, all at once, Simon uttered a wild cry.

"A sail! A sail! Look!" He danced up and down and pointed excitedly.

They thought he was mad, but Thad soon saw that there was indeed a sail bearing down on them.

As she drew nearer they made her out to be a large vessel.

"Has she sighted us, think you?" asked Simon.

"She must have," said Thad; "she is coming right for us. Look, we are in high luck again my boys."

"What's the matter?" asked Oliver.

"Our chance has come to go home. Yonder vessel is bearing north, and doubtless will take us to New York."

Simon almost shouted in his joy.

"Then I shall see Katrina again," he kept repeating.

In half an hour they trod the deck of the *Albatross*, which, as Thad had guessed, was aiming to reach New York.

The captain willingly agreed to let them work their way home, and in good time they once more trod the narrow streets of the town from whence they had started on their mad hunt for Capt. Kidd.

Our boys had learned caution, and were very chary about speaking too much concerning their wonderful adventures; but Thad had written them all down, and in this manner did they fall into my hands.

They had not come back entirely empty-handed either, for secreted in the lining of their garments, they had each a handful of diamonds, the value of which was sufficient to give the young owners a start in life.

And these they came by honestly as treasure trove, though it might be assumed that the same were originally the property of those unfortunates who fell into the hands of Sir Harry Morgan when he was sacking the coast of Central America. And here we will leave Thad and his friends.

THE END.

Important Notice.

Beginning with next week's issue (No. 38) this library will be known as

PAUL JONES WEEKLY.

It will contain exclusively stories of the adventures of this gallant American naval hero while destroying British men-'o-war and while preying upon the commerce of our adversaries during the struggle for independence.

Don't fail to buy the next number, boys. It will be entitled:

Paul Jones' Cruise for Glory;
or,

The Sign of the Coiled Rattlesnake.

PRICE FIVE CENTS.

COME BOYS, COME GET THE ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

"Teach the American boy how to become an athlete and so lay the foundation of a constitution greater than that of the United States."
—Wise Sayings from Tip Top.

YOU like fun, adventure and mystery, don't you? Well, you can find them all in the pages of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY. As the name implies, the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY is devoted to the sports that all young people delight in. It has bright, handsome, colored covers, and each story is of generous length. You are looking for a big five cents worth of good reading and you can get it here. Ask your newsdealer for any of the titles listed below. He has them in stock. Be sure to get ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY. Like other good things it has its imitations.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1—Jack Lightfoot's Challenge; or, The Winning of the Wager. | 17—Jack Lightfoot in the Saddle; or, A Jockey for Just One Day. |
| 2—Jack Lightfoot's Hockey Team; or, The Rival Athletes of Old Cranford. | 18—Jack Lightfoot's Dilemma; or, A Traitor on the Diamond. |
| 3—Jack Lightfoot's Great Play; or, Surprising the Academy Boys. | 19—Jack Lightfoot's Cyclone Finish; or, How Victory Was Snatched From Defeat. |
| 4—Jack Lightfoot's Athletic Tournament; or, Breaking the Record Quarter-Mile Dash. | 20—Jack Lightfoot in Camp; or, Young Athletes at Play in the Wilderness. |
| 5—Jack Lightfoot in the Woods; or, Taking the Hermit Trout of Simms' Hole. | 21—Jack Lightfoot's Disappearance; or, The Turning-up of an Old Enemy. |
| 6—Jack Lightfoot's Trump Curve; or, The Wizard Pitcher of the Four-Town League. | 22—Jack Lightfoot's "Stone Wall" Infield; or, Making a Reputation in the League. |
| 7—Jack Lightfoot's Crack Nine; or, How Old "Wagon Tongue" Won the Game. | 23—Jack Lightfoot's Talisman; or, The Only Way to Win Games in Baseball. |
| 8—Jack Lightfoot's Winning Oar; or, A Hot Race for the Cup. | 24—Jack Lightfoot's Mad Auto Dash; or, Speeding at a Ninety Mile Clip. |
| 9—Jack Lightfoot, The Young Naturalist; or, The Mystery of Thunder Mountain. | 25—Jack Lightfoot Afloat; or, The Cruise of the Canvas Canoes. |
| 10—Jack Lightfoot's Team-Work; or, Pulling a Game Out of the Fire. | 26—Jack Lightfoot's Hard Luck; or, A Lightning Triple Play in the Ninth. |
| 11—Jack Lightfoot's Home Run; or, A Glorious Hit in the Right Place. | 27—Jack Lightfoot's Iron Arm; or, How the New "Spit" Ball Worked the Charm. |
| 12—Jack Lightfoot, Pacemaker; or, What Happened on a Century Run. | 28—Jack Lightfoot on the Mat; or, The Jiu-Jitsu Trick that Failed to Work. |
| 13—Jack Lightfoot's Lucky Puncture; or, A Young Athlete Among the Hoboes. | 29—Jack Lightfoot's All-Sports Team; or, How Lafe Lampton Threw the Hammer. |
| 14—Jack Lightfoot, the Magician; or, Quelling a Mutiny in the Nine. | 30—Jack Lightfoot in the Box; or, The Mascot that "Hoodooed" the Nine. |
| 15—Jack Lightfoot's Lightning Battery; or, Kidnaping a Star Pitcher. | 31—Jack Lightfoot's Lucky Find; or, The New Man Who Covered "Short." |
| 16—Jack Lightfoot's Strategy; or, Hare-and-Hounds Over Cranford Hills. | 32—Jack Lightfoot, Archer; or, The Strange Secret an Arrow Revealed. |
| | 33—Jack Lightfoot's Cleverness; or, The Boy Who Butted In. |
| | 34—Jack Lightfoot's Decision; or, That Chestnut of "Playing Against Ten Men." |

PRICE, FIVE CENTS.

: : : For Sale by all Newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, upon receipt of price by publishers : : :

WINNER LIBRARY CO., 165 West Fifteenth St., NEW YORK

THE RED RAVEN LIBRARY

THRILLING SEA STORIES

This library represents an entirely new idea. It is totally different from any other now published. The stories detail the adventures of three plucky lads who set out to capture the notorious Captain Kidd. Every real boy has longed to read more about the doings of this bold marauder of the seas and the opportunity is now given them.

The stories are of generous length and without equals in thrilling adventure and interest. The best sea stories ever written.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 4—Defying the Sea Wolf; or, Thad at Bay in the Powder Magazine. | 22—Tiger of the Sea; or, The Three Castaways of the Gulf. |
| 5—The Jolly <i>Red Raven</i> ; or, Capt. Kidd's Daring Raid on Old New York. | 23—The Pirates of The Keys; or, Our Boys Afloat on the Spanish Main. |
| 6—The Corsair Captain; or, Thad and His Chums Afloat. | 24—Capt. Kidd at Bay; or, Marooned On a Sand-Spit. |
| 7—The Death's Head Rovers; or, How Thad Outwitted the Coast Freebooters. | 25—The Silver Barque; or, Capt. Kidd's Last Prize. |
| 8—Walking the Plank; or, The Last Cruise of the <i>Flying-Scud</i> . | 26—Among the Buccaneers; or, Thad and His Chums in Desperate Straits. |
| 9—Capt. Kidd's Revenge; or, Thad Among the Tigers of the Sea. | 27—The Red Scourge; or, How Morgan, the Buccaneer, Stormed the Citadel. |
| 10—The Chest of Doubloons; or, How Three Boys Defied the Buccaneers. | 28—The Chase of the Slaver; or, Thad Among the Indigo Planters. |
| 11—The Rival Pirates; or, Thad and His Chums in Irons. | 29—Morgan's Coast Raiders; or, Thad at the Sacking of Maracaibo. |
| 12—Capt. Kidd's Stratagem; or, Simple Simon Takes Soundings. | 30—The Buccaneer's Ghost; or Thad's Adventures with the Pearl Divers. |
| 13—The <i>Red Raven's</i> Prize; or, How Young Thad Sailed a Pirate Barque. | 31—The Sea Cat; or, How Our Boys Held the Fort. |
| 14—Nailed to the Mast; or, The Last of Capt. Kidd's "Hole in the Wall." | 32—The Phantom Galleon; or, Thad's Adventures Along the Isthmus. |
| 15—Capt. Kidd's Long Chase; or, Thad and His Chums in the Tropics. | 33—A Blue Water Free-Lance; or, Thad Adrift in a Leaking Pinnacle. |
| 16—Set Adrift by Pirates; or, Thad's Adventures in the Saragossa Sea. | 34—A Corsair of the Carribees; or, The Unlucky Silver "Pieces of Eight." |
| 17—To Sink or Swim; or, Thad and His Friends On Blue Water. | 35—On Pirate Island; or, The Battle of the Rival Sea Wolves. |
| 18—Capt. Kidd's Drag-Net; or, How Young Thad Hoodwinked the Buccaneers. | 36—In Tropic Seas; or, Thad's Strange Adventures at Hispaniola. |
| 19—The Phantom Pirate; or, Thad and His Chums on the Haunted Ship. | 37—The Specter Brig; or, Our Boys Afloat on a Raft. |
| 20—The Winged Witch; or, How Three Boys Saved the Treasure Galleon. | 38—The Young Marooners; or, What Thad Found on Treasure Island. |
| 21—Capt. Kidd in New Orleans; or, The Pirate Scourge of the Rigolets. | |

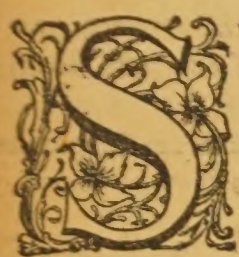
PRICE, FIVE CENTS.

: : : For Sale by all Newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, upon receipt of price by publishers : : :

WINNER LIBRARY CO., 165 West Fifteenth St., NEW YORK

STIRRING SEA TALES

PAUL JONES WEEKLY



TORIES of the adventures of the gallant American hero, Paul Jones, in the battles he had with the British men-o'-war during the Revolution.

The history of his brave deeds forms some of the most interesting and brilliant pages in American history, and the stories which appear in "Paul Jones Weekly" are so fascinating and full of the spirit of patriotism that no real boy can resist the temptation to read them.

LIST OF TITLES

- 1—Paul Jones' Cruise for Glory; or, The Sign of the Coiled Rattlesnake.
- 2—Paul Jones at Bay; or, Striking a Blow for Liberty.
- 3—Paul Jones' Pledge; or, The Tiger of the Atlantic.
- 4—Paul Jones' Bold Swoop; or, Cutting Out a British Supply Ship.
- 5—Paul Jones' Strategy; or, Outwitting the Fleets of Old England.
- 6—Paul Jones' Long Chase; or, The Last Shot in the Locker.
- 7—Out with Paul Jones; or, Giving Them a Bad Fright Along the English Coast.
- 8—Paul Jones Afloat and Ashore; or, Stirring Adventures in London Town.
- 9—Paul Jones' Swamp Trail; or, Outwitting the Coast Raiders.
- 10—Paul Jones' Defiance; or, How the Virginia Planter Invaded "Robbers' Roost."

- 11—Paul Jones' Double; or, Cruise of the *Floating Feather*.
- 12—Adrift with Paul Jones; or, The Last of the Lagoon Pirates.
- 13—Paul Jones Against Odds; or, The Story of a Wonderful Fight.
- 14—Paul Jones' Sealed Orders; or, Special Duty in the Caribbees.
- 15—Paul Jones Among the Redcoats; or, The Fight off Tobago.
- 16—Paul Jones and the Letter of Marque; or, Clipping the Tiger's Claws.
- 17—Paul Jones' Running Fight; or, A Blow for Freedom at Old Nassau.
- 18—Paul Jones' Secret Foe; or, Traitors Aboard the *Providence*.
- 19—The Cruise of the *Eagle*; or, Rescued by Paul Jones.
- 20—Paul Jones Among the Slaves; or, The *Portland's* White Captive.

PRICE, FIVE CENTS

For Sale by all Newsdealers, or Sent by the Publishers Upon Receipt of Price

The Winner Library Co., 165 West 15th St., New York

COME BOYS, COME GET THE ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

"Teach the American boy how to become an athlete and so lay the foundation of a constitution greater than that of the United States."
—Wise Sayings from Tip Top.

YOU like fun, adventure and mystery, don't you? Well, you can find them all in the pages of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY. As the name implies, the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY is devoted to the sports that all young people delight in. It has bright, handsome, colored covers, and each story is of generous length. You are looking for a big five cents worth of good reading and you can get it here. Ask your newsdealer for any of the titles listed below. He has them in stock. Be sure to get ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY. Like other good things it has its imitations.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 20—Jack Lightfoot in Camp; or, Young Athletes at Play in the Wilderness. | 37—Jack Lightfoot's Nerve; or, A Desperate Mutiny at the "Gym." |
| 21—Jack Lightfoot's Disappearance; or, The Turning-up of an Old Enemy. | 38—Jack Lightfoot's Halfback; or, Playing the Giants of the League. |
| 22—Jack Lightfoot's "Stone Wall" Infield; or, Making a Reputation in the League. | 39—Jack Lightfoot's Gridiron Boys; or, Leading a Patched-up Team to Victory. |
| 23—Jack Lightfoot's Talisman; or, The Only Way to Win Games in Baseball. | 40—Jack Lightfoot's Trap Shooting; or, Up Against the Champions of the Gun Club. |
| 24—Jack Lightfoot's Mad Auto Dash; or, Speeding at a Ninety Mile Clip. | 41—Jack Lightfoot's Touch-down; or, A Hard Nut to Crack at Highland. |
| 25—Jack Lightfoot Afloat; or, The Cruise of the Canvas Canoes. | 42—Jack Lightfoot's Flying Wedge; or, How Kirtland Won the Game for Cranford. |
| 26—Jack Lightfoot's Hard Luck; or, A Lightning Triple Play in the Ninth. | 43—Jack Lightfoot's Great Kick; or, The Tackle That Did Not Work. |
| 27—Jack Lightfoot's Iron Arm; or, How the New "Spit" Ball Worked the Charm. | 44—Jack Lightfoot's Duck-Blind; or, A Strange Mystery of the Swamp. |
| 28—Jack Lightfoot on the Mat; or, The Jiu-Jitsu Trick that Failed to Work. | 45—Jack Lightfoot's Luck; or, Glorious Days of Sport Ahead. |
| 29—Jack Lightfoot's All-Sports Team; or, How Lafe Lampton Threw the Hammer. | 46—Jack Lightfoot's Triumph; or, Back from a Watery Grave. |
| 30—Jack Lightfoot in the Box; or, The Mascot that "Hoodooed" the Nine. | 47—Jack Lightfoot Down in Dixie; or, The Voyage of a Single-Hand Cruiser. |
| 31—Jack Lightfoot's Lucky Find; or, The New Man Who Covered "Short." | 48—Jack Lightfoot's Plans; or, Wrecked on Indian River. |
| 32—Jack Lightfoot, Archer; or, The Strange Secret an Arrow Revealed. | 49—Jack Lightfoot on Snowshoes; or, The Chase of the Great Moose. |
| 33—Jack Lightfoot's Cleverness; or, The Boy Who Butted In. | 50—Jack Lightfoot Snowed-Up; or, Lost in the Trackless Canadian Wilderness. |
| 34—Jack Lightfoot's Decision; or, That Chestnut of "Playing Against Ten Men." | 51—Jack Lightfoot's Enemies; or, A Fight to the Finish. |
| 35—Jack Lightfoot, Pennant-Winner; or, Winding up the Four Town League. | 52—Jack Lightfoot at Seagirt; or, New Friends and Old Foes. |
| 36—Jack Lightfoot's Pledge; or, Bound in Honor. | 53—Jack Lightfoot's Hazing; or, Tricking the Tricksters. |
| | 54—Jack Lightfoot's First Victory; or, A Battle for Blood. |

PRICE, FIVE CENTS.

: : : For Sale by all Newsdealers, or sent, postpaid, upon receipt of price by publishers : : :

WINNER LIBRARY CO., 165 West Fifteenth St., NEW YORK

Thrilling Sea Stories

THE RED RAVEN LIBRARY

A true American boy likes tales of brave deeds accomplished by lads on the free, rolling ocean, especially if there is a dash of spice added in the shape of vigorous combat between right and wrong. Therefore, every boy who reads five cent libraries cannot fail to be interested in the splendid tales of the sea now being published by THE RED RAVEN LIBRARY.

These stories deal with the intensely interesting adventures of a trio of brave lads who, allured by the promise of what was then considered an enormous reward, set out to capture the notorious Captain Kidd. This famous freebooter has been made the hero of a hundred different ventures and his dark deeds have even been sung to rollicking music, but it has been left to THE RED RAVEN LIBRARY to show his true character.

Remember, boys, these stories do not glorify piracy and are not harmful in any way, but detail in a most fascinating manner, the adventures of our heroes among the buccaneers of the Spanish Main. Your newsdealer has the latest number on hand. For interesting reading we advise you to get it.

Price, 5 Cents

For sale by ALL newsdealers or sent, postpaid,
by the publishers upon receipt of price.

THE WINNER LIBRARY COMPANY
165 West Fifteenth Street, New York